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ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MATTER AT THE NEW YORK, N. Y., POST OFFICE.

February 28, 1894.

No. 801.

Published Every  
Wednesday.

*Beadle & Adams, Publishers,*  
98 WILLIAM STREET, NEW YORK.

Ten Cents a Copy.  
\$5.00 a Year.

Vol. LXII.

## THE WATER-WOLVES' DETECTIVE;



OR,

TRAPPING THE  
GRAVE GHOULS.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.

"A STARTLING FREAK OF NATURE, SURELY, AND YET THAT HAND, THAT FINGER, POINTS DIRECTLY DOWN UPON A GRAVE!"



# The Water Wolves' Detective;

OR,

## TRAPPING the GRAVE GHOULS.

A Romance of the Pointing Finger.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE POINTING FINGER.

"How strange! How perfect!"

The speaker stopped suddenly, and his eyes were riveted upon a group of trees before him. There, strikingly revealed, as though cut with shears out of the foliage, was a perfect hand, the index finger pointing downward.

It was a freak of nature, it seemed, and yet one that was perfect, the wrist, the hand, the pointing finger, being relieved against the sky beyond as though painted there.

A mass of dark clouds were gathering in the heavens, and their inky blackness was riven now and then with darts of lightning, while the air was oppressive before the coming of a storm, not a breath of wind stirring to mar the symmetry of that pointing finger.

The one who gazed thereon was a man of twenty-eight, with a strong face, resolute, fearless, every feature cast in a perfect mold.

His eyes were large, shaded by long lashes, and in repose had a dreamy look; but now, when lighted up by the discovery of the hand, with the pointing finger, they seemed to blaze with intense interest.

He was dressed in a sailor suit, yet wore not a tarpaulin but a slouch hat, and carried a leather satchel or valise in his hand, which he had dropped at his feet as he stood gazing upon the hand in the foliage of the thicket, while he said in an impressive way:

"A startling freak of nature, surely, and yet that hand, that finger, *points directly down upon a grave!*"

In the edge of the little clump of timber was a small burying-ground, doubtless the last resting-place of some family that had passed away, for only half a score of graves were there, the monuments moss-covered by age. The graves were close-clustered with one exception, and that grave a little off to one side, under a spreading tree.

*Directly down upon this isolated grave was the foliage finger pointing!*"

Unmindful of the gathering storm, the man stood gazing at the strange sight, the muttering thunder increasing in power as the storm swept nearer, and the lightning becoming more and more vivid, though still that breathless calm, that apprehensive lull, rested upon all.

Behind him, a quarter of a mile distant, and several hundred feet below the spot where he stood, was the Hudson, its bosom unruffled, yet broken here and there by a vessel that had stripped to bare poles and anchored to meet the fury of the coming storm.

Before him stretched fields and woodland, and his way led along a path, but little trod, that wound on toward a mansion a quarter of a mile distant, surrounded by majestic trees which shut it nearly out from view.

A steamer was plowing swiftly along over the mirror-like waters, and from it, at a small pier, the man had just landed, taking his way up the hillside with the manner of one who knew his surroundings.

His face had worn a smile, his look had been one of pleased satisfaction, until, as he walked swiftly along he had suddenly come upon the view that met his eyes—the sight of that pointing finger.

"And whose grave is it?" he muttered.

"Here lie the ashes of my race, for five generations, and that new grave tells me that some one I left at home ten years ago has gone."

"Is it my father? Is it my little sister, Ruth?"

"There is no head-board to tell the story, and I must hasten on and know who that bears my name has passed away."

Seizing his satchel he started onward, but, just as he did so a fiery bolt from the black clouds above descended upon the group of trees; the branches were riven and scattered, and the man dropped in his tracks like one dead.

### CHAPTER II.

#### THE WANDERER'S RETURN.

Like the crashing peal of thunder, following the lightning's stroke, had died away, the man arose to his feet, staggering like one foolish with wine, and pressing his hands over his face, as though to shut out the glare that had nearly blinded him.

He seemed for a moment dazed, but gradually reason resumed its sway, his strength came back and he stood gazing upon the scene about him.

"That pointing hand is gone, the foliage and branches having been shattered by the lightning's stroke!"

"How strangely near it came to pointing to my grave, for there I would have rested, had I been killed."

"Now to go on to the dear old home, ever present with me in all my wanderings, and see what welcome will be mine."

As he spoke he took up his valise and walked on toward the little graveyard, for the path led around it and across the fields to the mansion in the timber beyond.

A branch, riven from the tree above, and stripped of its bark and leaves, had been driven a foot deep into the grave, and there remained, some three feet of it being above ground.

"Strange, very strange, for no other grave has been marred. I cannot understand this at all."

"And, whose grave is this, the only one unmarked by a head-stone of all that are here?"

He stood a moment musing, and then said again:

"There lies my poor mother, and this one is near her side. Great God! can it be that it is my father? Has he died and does not know all, does not know what I alone can tell him. No! no! no! it cannot be, it cannot be!"

So saying he hastened on toward the mansion just as the big, pattering rain-drops began to fall.

Going over the stile at the fence, he hastened on to the mansion, which, as he approached, he saw wore an air of desolation and neglect.

"It must be my father that is dead, for the old home seems deserted. But my dear little sister, Ruth? What of her?"

Hastening up the broad steps, he raised the heavy brass knocker and let it fall several times.

The sound seemed like the knocking upon a tomb, for it gave back only echo.

Going around the broad piazza he saw that the mansion was indeed deserted, but an outer cottage was occupied, for an old man stood in the doorway regarding him.

"It is old Thurber, and now I will know all."

So saying he hastened through the driving rain to the little cottage, saying as he advanced:

"Ho, Thurber, bless your old soul, this is a poor welcome the Prodigal Son gets upon his return home."

"Master Lionel! is this you or your ghost?" cried the old man, grasping him by both hands.

"It is not my ghost, Thurber, I assure you, though the old home seems now a fit abiding-place for ghosts and goblins; but, tell me: what does it all mean?"

"Your father is dead, Master Lionel," was the low reply.

"Dead? It is as I feared," and the man sunk down into a chair and buried his face in his hands.

The old servant stood regarding him in silence, until he raised his head, and then he said:

"You wish me to tell you all, Master Lionel?"

"Yes, from the time when, ten years ago, I left this home under a cloud," eagerly said the wanderer.

"It is soon told, Master Lionel, for your going hurt your father deeply, and Miss Ruth missed you so she was sent away to boarding-school in the city, and the colonel dwelt here all alone with Polly and myself only to look after his comfort, and Patsey had charge in the stables."

"My father believed all that was said of me, Thurber?" came the low query.

"Yes, Master Lionel, I suppose so, though he never mentioned your name even to me, sir."

"Miss Ruth came back in vacation days, and used to ride about the country alone, and row and sail upon the river; but, when she graduated, a year ago, master went down to fetch her home, and on the way back the steamer caught fire, master was injured, and, but for the courage of a young man who was on board, both he and your sister would have lost their lives; but he saved them at the imminent risk of his own life, and from that day became a welcome guest at Cedar Hall."

"Who was the noble fellow, Thurber?"

"His name is Grayson Glyndon, sir, and Miss Ruth is now his wife."

"His wife? Great God! I have thought of my dear little sister as only a child; but tell me more, Thurber, tell me who it is that my sister has married, and where she now is?"

"He is a handsome man, Master Lionel, a very handsome man, and yet, somehow, I do not like him; but master seemed to regard him most highly, and when he died left his riches, estate and all to him, or that is, sir, your share—Miss Ruth getting hers."

"Ha! I am then disinherited?" said the young man, bitterly.

"Yes, sir, he did not leave you a dollar, it is said."

"So be it; but I regret more that my father should have died in anger with me than that he should have disinherited me."

"But tell me of his death, tell me all, Thurber."

"There is little to tell, sir, only that Mr. Glyndon, after his rescue of your father and Miss Ruth, came often to Cedar Hall, and devotedly cared for the colonel, who seemed never

to rally from the hurts received on the burning steamer."

"He lived just five months after it, sir, and before he died Miss Ruth married Mr. Glyndon at the bedside of her father, who never spoke after the ceremony was ended."

"Immediately after his death the colonel was buried, sir, and Mr. Glyndon and Miss Ruth departed from Cedar Hall, Patsey being left in charge of the mansion."

"But two nights did Patsey sleep in the mansion, Master Lionel, for, as he did not appear in the morning, I went to waken him, thinking he had overslept himself."

"I'll never forget it, Master Lionel, for I found Patsey seated in your father's big chair, laughing and talking to himself, for he had gone clean mad."

"Mad?"

"Yes, sir, and he is now in the Lunatic Asylum."

"Good God! that man had a giant frame and strong brain, so what could have driven him mad?"

"Something he saw, sir, that night in the old mansion, I am sure; but when we asked him about it he would tell us to hush, adding in a whisper:

"I saw the dead walking, you know, and dead men walking about at night is enough to madden any brain."

"This is all we could get from him, sir, and Mr. Glyndon came up and had him put in an asylum, where he is well cared for."

"And Glyndon does not live here now at all?"

"Oh, no, sir; he has not passed a night in the mansion since the colonel's death, and Polly and myself have charge, but we keep the old place closed up and never enter it, living here in our cottage, as you see."

"And where is your wife now, Thurber?"

"She drove to the village, sir, but will return as soon as the rain is over; and she'll be awful glad to see you, Master Lionel, as I am, for we always liked you, sir, as you know."

"Yes, Thurber, you were always faithful to me; but I will pass to-night in the old mansion, in my own room, and to-morrow I will go my way, for I have no right here now, having been disinherited."

"I am sorry, sir, very sorry; but after you ran away, sir, master never spoke your name; but, Master Lionel, you do not intend to sleep in the old mansion, sir?"

"I do, unless you forbid it, Thurber, as I suppose you have the right to do?"

"God forbid, sir; but it is a desolate place to pass the night, and we can give you a room in the cottage."

"No, I will sleep in the mansion."

"But remember, sir, what Patsey saw there turned his brain."

"Nothing that I may see there, Thurber, can turn mine," was the resolute response.

"Well, sir, when Polly gets back we will go in and make up your room and let in some fresh air— Ah, there she comes now."

And a covered wagon, drawn by an old horse, came along the winding drive toward the cottage, a woman of fifty holding the reins.

As she drew up at the cottage her eyes fell upon the stranger, and after a close scrutiny a flash of recognition came over her face as she cried:

"Master Lionel! Though you have changed from boy to man I know you! I cannot forget those eyes."

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE MIDNIGHT VISION.

COLONEL DAVID LONSDALE was a man of refinement and wealth, and his home, Cedar Hall, was one of the grandest of the old-time mansions upon the Hudson River.

He had inherited a vast fortune, and, reared in the army, had married a Mexican maiden while stationed at a fort upon the Rio Grande.

After distinguishing himself in the war with Mexico he had resigned his commission and settled down to a life of ease at his home of Cedar Hall.

Always austere and a silent man, he had become more so after the death of his wife, who left him two children, Lionel Lonsdale, whom the reader has met, and Ruth, the latter being some seven years the junior of her brother.

A handsome youth, Lionel had begun early to lead a somewhat wild life, and for some scrape he had been dismissed from the Naval Academy where his father had succeeded in placing him.

Having been allowed money most freely he became extravagant, for one of his years, until his father was forced to refuse to pay another of his debts, and brought him away from college to remain at home under a tutor's care.

The day after the arrival of the tutor, Colonel Lonsdale was called from home, and took his daughter Ruth with him, expecting to be absent a week. The tutor went away also the same day, being summoned to the bedside of his dying mother.

Thus was Lionel, a youth of eighteen, left alone in the mansion, with only the old family servants.



The day after his father's departure the agent of his city property arrived, bringing with him a large sum of money, the rents of the colonel's city property, and he paid it into the hands of Lionel, taking his receipt therefor.

The morning following, old Thurber, who lived in the cottage not far from the mansion, was alarmed by the servants with the information that Master Lionel could nowhere be found.

The front door had been found open, his room was in disorder, as though from hasty packing, and the youth had vanished.

Upon his father's desk was a letter, in Lionel's handwriting, and sealed with wax and stamped with his seal-ring; but what its contents were could only be guessed at by the servants.

The colonel was at once telegraphed for by Thurber, and the faithful old servant met him at the station on his return and told him just what had happened.

Entering the library with his master, Thurber had watched him as he broke the seal of the letter, saw him turn livid and grasp the desk for support, and then came in a hoarse voice, that quivered with emotion:

"Thurber, let no one in this house ever speak the name of Lionel Lonsdale in my presence."

"Is the young master not to return, sir?" faltered Thurber.

"Never!" came in thunder tones from the colonel's lips, and from that day the name of Lionel was never spoken before his father.

Poor little Ruth, who idolized her handsome brother, grieved deeply for his absence; but she dared not speak of him before her father, after an angry outburst when she had once asked of what he had been guilty, and so the wild youth was regarded as though he was dead.

There were whisperings among the servants, as to the contents of the letter left by the youth for his father, and it was said that the money paid to Lionel by the city agent was missing, and that the reckless boy had taken it, no one doubted for a moment.

The tutor returning, was dismissed, as his duties had ended with Lionel's flight, and a governess was secured for Ruth.

Thus the days passed at Cedar Hall, until nearly ten years were numbered, and each year found Colonel Lonsdale more austere and silent than ever.

Returning with Ruth one night on the steamer, as Thurber had stated, it had taken fire, and but for the courage of a young man both would have lost their lives, for Colonel Lonsdale had been severely injured in trying to stem the mad panic of the passengers.

The bravery of the young man resulted in the saving of many lives; but he devoted himself particularly to the care of Colonel Lonsdale and Ruth, and, accompanying them to Cedar Hall, from that time became a welcome guest at the mansion.

Grayson Glyndon was no ordinary personage, as Colonel Lonsdale soon discovered, for he was a man of thirty-two, of striking presence, a lawyer with a fair practice, thoroughly well informed upon all matters, and a brilliant conversationalist.

He had been reared on a Southern plantation, rode well, drove four-in-hand with ease, was a crack shot, and could manage a boat like a sailor.

The colonel seemed to be completely won over by the young preserver of his life, and noticing his love for Ruth, had urged her to return his affection, if she wished to please him, for the maiden had not seemed easily won by Grayson Glyndon, though she could not but admire him for his brilliant accomplishments, and feel toward him most kindly as one to whom she owed her rescue from a fearful death.

With deepest pain Ruth saw her father's health rapidly failing, and knew that before very long she would be left an orphan, and she consented to cheer his dying hours by becoming the wife of Grayson Glyndon, that he might die with the thought that she was not left without a protector.

Beautiful in face, graceful in form, and with a nature most lovable, Ruth Lonsdale had suitors by the score, especially as it was known that her father would leave her a vast inheritance; but, if she had other preference than for Grayson Glyndon, she did not show it, and calmly obeyed her father's wish, and, standing by his bedside, as his life fast ebbed away, became the wife of the man that had been selected for her husband.

Then, as she bent over her father to receive his kiss and blessing, she found that he was dead!

Away from Cedar Hall went the young bride and her husband as soon as Colonel Lonsdale was laid in his grave, and the old mansion, with its grand furniture and luxurious surroundings, was left to the care of the three faithful old servants.

But strange indeed was it to find that Patsey Belt, who had a room in the house, had been driven mad by some strange, startling sight that had met his vision in the hours of the night.

So violent was his madness he had to be taken

off to a madhouse, leaving the place deserted wholly, for Thurber and his wife dwelt in the little cottage near by, and for no consideration would occupy any portion of the mansion.

Thus a year passed, and, deserted, desolate, slowly going to decay, Cedar Hall was found by Lionel Lonsdale the wanderer and disinherited young master of the once lordly home.

Years, long years had gone by since the night he had left his home, and he returned to find his father lying in the family burying-ground, his little sister, as she was then, grown up to womanhood and become a wife, and he utterly cast off by the father he had loved so fondly.

"Will Ruth refuse me welcome, too, I wonder?" he asked himself, as, after a good supper, prepared for him by Polly, he paced to and fro in the library of the mansion, the sole occupant of the old home, and listened to the doleful patter of the rain upon the window-panes.

Without all was darkness and storm, and within the lamp seemed to be unable to light up the gloom, which was reflected in his heart.

Throwing himself into a large chair, the favorite seat of his father, he closed his eyes and became lost in deepest reverie, a reverie most painful, for he murmured in a broken voice:

"Would to God I could recall the past from out its grave!"

How long he sat thus he did not know, nor did he seem to sleep or to grow unconscious; but suddenly he beheld before him the same strange scene he had witnessed in the afternoon.

He saw the little burying-ground, the unmarked grave of his father, and, over all, boldly revealed in the foliage, was the *Pointing Finger*! Then suddenly there came a terrific crash, and he sprang to his feet as the vision vanished from before his eyes.

The thunder was rolling away in deep-voiced mutterings, but about him all was darkness, for the lamp no longer burned.

"Great God! that vision of the Pointing Finger once more! Where am I?"

A moment of silence and he collected his thoughts, and taking a match from his pocket quickly lighted it, for it seemed to him that he was not alone in the room.

But the light revealed no one, and the lamp he quickly lit and then gazed about him.

"It was a dream; but, oh! how vivid, how startling it was! No one is here, and yet it seemed to me that the room held others than myself. Are spirits with me from the dead?"

"I could almost wish that it were so; but who put out the lamp, if no one was here? The concussion it was, I guess; but I will have a look over the old mansion," and taking up the lamp he went from room to room.

But all was silence and loneliness, and returning to his own room, where he had passed his boyhood days, he threw himself upon his bed and soon dropped into a deep slumber, from which he never awoke until he heard Thurber knocking upon the outer door to arouse him, and the old man was becoming alarmed, fearing that Lionel Lonsdale had, like Patsey Belt, also gone mad.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### A SECRET BETWEEN THEM.

"WELL, old man, I was sleeping most soundly, for, though I heard you knock, I found it hard to arouse myself," said Lionel, as he let old Thurber into the room.

"Yes, Master Lionel, you were so sound asleep that I had begun to fear you were dead, or—"

"Or what, Thurber?"

"Or had gone mad, sir, like poor Patsey," was the reply, in a whisper.

"No, Thurber, I am in good health and have a strong brain, but you look pale and disturbed, old man."

"Yes, sir."

"What has happened?"

"You are not superstitious, Master Lionel?"

"Not in the least, Thurber, though, if I remember aright, you are."

"Yes, sir, I'm a trifle so."

"Has aught happened to arouse your superstitious fears, Thurber?" asked Lionel, seeing that the old man had something upon his mind.

"Yes, sir."

"Out with it, Thurber."

"Well, sir, the tree above master's grave was struck by lightning last night."

"That was done yesterday, Thurber, as I thought I told you, and the shock knocked me down."

"Yes, sir, you spoke of the Pointing Finger you saw in the trees, and that the thicket was struck; but last night the lightning struck the large tree at the head of master's grave and split it to atoms, and—"

"Nol can this be true?" and Lionel seemed amazed.

"Yes, sir, and upon the very night of your return; but that is not all, sir."

"Well?"

"I went by there to drive up the cows that got out of the pasture last night, and I was startled at seeing the tree shattered to pieces, so walked to it, and there, Master Lionel, I beheld a sight that frightened me."

"Well, old man, let me hear all," and Lionel Lonsdale was impressed in spite of his nerve.

"A dead man lay upon the grave, sir."

"A dead man? Great God!"

"Yes, sir."

"Who was he?"

"That I do not know, sir; but he lay there, slain by the lightning, and in his hand he grasped a pick, while a shovel was near him, the handle of each in splinters."

"Thurber, this is a strange story that you tell me."

"It is a true one, sir, for the man still lies there, and I came to tell you, for I have not told my wife."

Lionel Lonsdale was silent for a few moments, as he hastily continued dressing, and when his toilet was finished, he said:

"Thurber, I will go to the grave and see that body; but when I return you had better hitch your horse to the buggy and have him ready to go to the village to notify the coroner; but await my return, and in the mean time do not speak to your wife upon the subject."

"I will not, sir, for I fear it would frighten her badly, as she's getting old and a trifle nervous; but you'll soon be back, sir?"

"Yes, and tell Polly I have gone for a walk before breakfast," and Lionel left the mansion by the front door and walked rapidly away down the weed-grown gravel drive.

The sun was shining brightly, the birds sung merrily in the trees, and the rain-drops glistened like diamonds upon the grass and foliage; but, unheeding the beauties of nature the returned wanderer hastened on, following the path to the little graveyard.

There a deathlike silence rested, for even the birds had flown away from the desolate spot. The large tree growing at the head of Colonel Lonsdale's grave had been riven to atoms, and the ground was torn up as with a plow.

But across the grave lay the form of a man.

His face was downward, his hands clutched the splinters of a pick, and he lay in a cramped position, his clothing in tatters, his flesh blackened by the lightning-stroke.

Turning him over Lionel saw that he was a man of forty, with a bearded, evil face, just such an one as might be a grave-robbor.

In one pocket was a piece of paper, and upon it were lines which were quickly read by the young man as being a map of the surrounding country and graveyard.

There was the river, with a little cove, and the words:

"Anchor here."

Then the landing was marked out, the path traced up over the hill to the graveyard and the exact number of steps given.

The graves were marked on the paper, the one in which lay the body of Colonel Lonsdale having the words over it:

"This one."

At the bottom was written:

"Make thorough search and leave grave as you found it."

This was all that the paper contained, but it told Lionel that a search of his father's grave was to have been made for some purpose, but what, he knew not.

Having searched the body, he found upon it a jack-knife bearing upon the handle the rudely-cut initials:

"B. B."

In the pocket was a roll of bank-bills and a few dollars in silver coins.

These Lionel placed in his handkerchief and pocketed, after which he stood a moment in deep thought.

Suddenly he started and walked rapidly away, following the path leading toward the river.

He soon came to the hill-top, from whence he could gain a view of the river, and his eyes fell upon a small vessel just standing out of the little cove designated upon the map.

She was a quarter of a mile away, but he noted her closely and with a sailor's eye.

A dingy looking craft she was, sadly needing painting, and with patched sails, worn dark by long usage, but her hull was strangely trim, and her canvas fitted as well as a racing yacht's.

"A sloop of thirty-two, cutter build, carrying a large spread of canvas, and with peculiarities I will jot down," he muttered, and taking out his notebook and pencil, he made a number of entries, sketching also the sails, with their peculiarities and the shape of the vessel, showing as he did so artistic talent of no mean order in his rapid work.

"They are within hearing, so I will hail and note the result," he continued, and his voice rung out like a bugle in the crisp morning air, as he shouted:

"Ho the sloop, ahoy!"

The three men on board were seen to start as his voice reached their ears, and catching sight of him they at once sprang to work, a flying jib was set, the topsail was run up and the mainsail trimmed close to catch all the breeze it could.

"They run for it, and thus prove their guilt, for that craft brought the man here who attempted to rob my father's grave— Ah! as I



thought, yonder craft is a fleet one, for she fairly flies over the waters."

For some time did Lionel watch the flying sloop, as though imprinting it indelibly upon his mind, and then he turned and walked back to the graveyard.

There he saw a lantern, twisted out of all shape by the lightning's stroke, and this he gathered up with the shovel and pick, placing them, with the dead body, upon his father's grave.

Hastily retracing his way to the mansion, he called Thurber one side and asked:

"Have you said aught to your wife of your discovery?"

"Not a word, sir."

"Well, it is my wish that you do not."

"Yes, sir, but when the coroner comes, she—"

"The coroner must not come, Thurber, for I wish this discovery to remain a secret between us alone."

"Master Lionel, but—"

"Hear me, Thurber. I left home under a cloud, as you know, and I return to find myself disinherited. I told you of the Pointing Finger, of the stroke of lightning, and now let me tell you that I had the same sight before me again last night, was awakened, if I was asleep, by the terrific peal of thunder, and found my lamp out."

"You discovered that the lightning had shivered the tree at my father's grave, and had slain a man who you said had sought shelter there from the storm. I tell you, Thurber, he went there to rob that grave, for his pick and shovel and a lamp prove this conclusively, while I have still further proof."

"Now I wish you to go there, dig down a couple of feet and place that man in the grave."

"With your father, sir?"

"Yes, for to open one of the others, or to dig a new grave might attract the eye of some curious person."

"But, Master Lionel, I do—"

"You must do as I tell you, Thurber, for I am determined to solve this mystery in my own way."

"Place the man in the grave and make it over anew; then clear up things about it and you can tell your wife that the tree was struck by lightning and you smoothed the grave over. Do this for me, good Thurber, and keep the secret between us, and some day out of darkness light may come."

"I hope so, sir; but if it should be found out about the dead man?"

"Then I will tell the truth, so you will have no trouble about it."

"Yes, sir."

"And, Thurber."

"Yes, Master Lionel."

"I wish neither you nor Polly to speak of my return home."

"I won't, sir, and I hope the old woman will not."

"At least for the present."

"You ask her not to do so, sir, and maybe she won't; but you know an old woman's tongue is hard to keep still, when there's anything to be kept secret, unless it's against herself."

"You seem to have studied woman nature thoroughly, Thurber; but now go to the grave and do as I asked you, and I will tell Polly you have gone to put up the fence, for I saw a part of it had blown down," and Lionel entered the cottage, where good old Polly welcomed him with a pleasant smile and set a tempting breakfast out before him.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE MYSTERIOUS SHOT AND VOICE.

IN the upper part of the city of New York there stands an old mansion, the grounds about it occupying an entire block.

It was at that time an old homestead, elegant and commodious, and the city streets had encroached upon its once spacious grounds, until about it were going up brownstone fronts, and far beyond it had now begun to stretch the city in its rapid growth.

A wall surrounded the mansion upon three sides, and in front was an iron fence, while the grounds were tastefully laid out and shaded with several majestic trees that cast the house in the deepest gloom after nightfall.

Seated in one of the spacious rooms of the old mansion, her hands resting upon a guitar upon her lap, but not touching the idle strings, was a young and beautiful woman.

So young was she that few would have believed her to be a wife, and so beautiful that none could have gazed upon her without deepest admiration.

Her hair was a rich auburn, and was most tastefully arranged about her haughty head, while her eyes, large, black, and with extremely long lashes, were full of a slumberous passion that it would seem dangerous to arouse.

Her form was the perfection of grace, and she was dressed with a degree of refinement of taste that one with her face could not but possess.

Not a jewel was in her ears, or upon her hand, though a band of gold encircled the wedding finger, the only ornament she wore.

Her eyes seemed to be looking back into the bygone, as she is introduced to the reader, and her thoughts are evidently not of the happiest, for her lips are compressed and a look almost stern rests upon her lovely face.

About her is an air of wealth and cultured taste, and the appointments of her home are elegant in the extreme.

Suddenly she starts, an impatiently-uttered expression escapes her lips, and running her taper fingers across the strings of her guitar, she seems to wish to drown thought in song, for at first low and plaintive, and then swelling into richness and power, as though her soul was in her singing, she sings a ballad of rare pathos and beauty.

As though not wishing to give herself time for thought, she at once raised her voice again in song, ending with the words:

"Oh, if you could but come back to me, Douglas, Douglas, Douglas, tender and true!"

Hardly had the last words left her lips, when a form darkened the open window, reaching to the floor, and in from the piazza stepped a man, who said earnestly:

"I am here, Ruth, as tender, as true, as the Douglas of the olden time."

A cry escaped her lips and she was upon her feet in an instant, startled by the one her song had seemed to summon as though with magic wand.

He was a man of perhaps thirty, possessing a tall, slender form, though indicative of strength, and an air of easy grace.

He was well-dressed, carried in one hand a soft hat, and his face was one to command respect and win admiration among men as well as among women.

"Douglas Drew!"

The young woman gasped the name rather than spoke it, and her beautiful face became livid.

"Yes, Ruth, I am Douglas Drew, your old lover, who lived a few months of happy romance near you, for I loved you, and hoped that you loved me; but I was called away unexpectedly, ere I could say farewell and ask you to promise to be my wife, and now, after two years, I return to find you false."

He spoke with a voice full of emotion, and his fine eyes were bent upon hers with a power that seemed to fascinate her.

A sensation of choking came over her, as deep feeling welled up from her heart; but checking all emotion she said coldly:

"Lieutenant Drew, I was not false to any vow, for you never asked me to make a vow. You left me without a word, and so I took from my heart all memory of you."

"Left you without a word, Ruth, why—"

"I am now, sir, Mrs. Grayson Glyndon," she said haughtily.

He bowed at the reproof and said:

"I was ordered off, at a moment's notice, to rejoin my regiment in the West; but I wrote you a long letter, telling you all, and that you had won my heart and begging for a sweet word of hope from you."

"You wrote me such a letter?" she asked hoarsely.

"I did, addressing it to your home of Cedar Hall, for I knew you were to leave school in a few days."

"No such letter ever reached me."

"On my honor I wrote it, Ruth."

"Would to God I had received it!" she cried bitterly, and then, as though recalling that she had shown her real feelings, for she saw his face light up, as he stepped toward her, she continued rapidly:

"No, no, I should not say that, for I am a wife now, and I have been, for a year; but I confess that when we were together in that olden time, you became my beau ideal of manhood, my hero, and had you told then the love you say you wrote you held for me, all would have been well; but now, alas! it is too late, for I am the wife of another. But, good God! what am I confessing to you, Douglas Drew?"

"Leave me, sir, and at once, and I beg you never to cross my path again, for between your life and mine a great gulf is fixed which neither can ever cross. Go, Lieutenant Drew; I command it!"

She looked queenly beautiful as she stood before him, her form drawn up to its full height, her right hand pointing to the door, her left resting upon her guitar.

"I obey your command, Mrs. Glyndon, and go from you forever, thereby proving how deep is the love I yet feel for you, another's though you be—farewell—Nay, do not shrink from me, for this is our last farewell, and I beg you do not draw your hand away."

He had seized her outstretched hand as he spoke, and bending over it imprinted thereon a kiss, just as a man strode into the room and cried in a voice that rung out threateningly, as it quivered with passion:

"By Heaven! but you shall die for that insult, villain!"

"My husband!" broke in startled tones from the young wife, as she beheld him stride forward, a pistol in his hand and leveled at Douglas Drew, who did not move or quail.

"I shall kill you!" hoarsely cried the maddened husband, and his face showed that he meant just what he said, and Douglas Drew's voice held no quiver as he calmly uttered the words:

"I am unarmed, sir, and I have done you no wrong."

"You came here to rob me of my wife, and I will kill you as I would any robber who sought to steal from me."

A wicked gleam crossed his face as he raised his pistol to fire, when suddenly, from some unknown source came a shot; the lamp was shivered to atoms, darkness intense fell upon the room, and a deep voice cried:

"Move from where you stand, Grayson Glyndon, and you die!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### A WOUNDED SOLDIER'S PLUCK.

FROM a train that drew up at one of the stations at that most famous of Jersey resorts, Long Branch, a perfect stream of beautiful humanity poured out upon the platform, until two-score fair girls, ranging from thirteen to eighteen years of age, had drawn up in line under the leadership of a refined-looking lady whose hair was tinged with silver, and two younger ones almost as merry as were the school-girls, for it was a bevy of pupils from Madame Rosini's fashionable New York school, bent on a picnic.

They had come for a long day of enjoyment at the seaside, before their school closed for the summer vacation, to scatter them to their homes, and launch many of them upon the world, as they crossed the threshold from girlhood to maidenhood.

One glance at the bevy of girls was sufficient to show that Madame Rosini's boast was a true one, that she had no homely scholars, for from the little miss of twelve with black eyes and red-gold hair, to the more dignified graduate of eighteen, all were pretty, some beautiful.

The "belle of the school," in the eyes of her mates, as well as others, was a young girl of seventeen, with a form that was perfection and a natural grace that was very bewitching.

Her face was more womanly than her years indicated, and there was a perfection of feature about it that made it irresistibly lovely.

With a certain dignity that was marked, she yet was full of life, and her large, passionate, dark eyes often lighted up with a sparkle of girlish mischief.

Her hair was a rich, golden auburn, and appeared to be very long, as it was coiled about her haughty head, and contrasted well with her dark eyes.

Her dress was rich and in perfect taste, and that she was a petted child of fortune there could be no doubt.

Each fair girl had a neat bundle to carry, her bathing suit in fact, and there were two maid-servants along who were loaded down with hampers for a picnic on the seaside.

Two little boxes and baskets were carried by many that had the look of containing *bon-bons* and fruit, and all set off for the little bit of woodland near the beach with joyous hearts and bright anticipations of a day of delight that would long be remembered.

One of the travelers referred to had been down on a prospecting tour several days before, and had selected the camping-place, engaged bath-houses not far away, and made all arrangements, so that she led the way as guide, the lovely girl just spoken of walking by her side.

It was a pretty spot, and the balmy ocean breeze, the bright sunshine and the prospect of a bath in the surf flushed the faces of all, and it was not long before the whole bevy of beauties were wandering along the sands, glancing out upon the waters at the vessels in sight, and running back as the heavy surf sent waves far upon the beach.

Bath-houses came in requisition, and the two-score maidens were darting about with joyous laughter in their pretty bathing-suits, and uttering wild shrieks if the waves caught them in an unguarded moment, for unlike mankind, few of the fair sex ever venture at once into the sea.

At last one maiden, in a stylish blue suit trimmed with white braid, and wearing a scarlet cap and sash, made a plunge into the surf.

She was a bold swimmer, and her companions gazed upon her with admiring awe, as she dived through the incoming breakers.

And there was one other who was gazing upon her with admiration, and that one was a horseman, who had been riding along the bank and had paused as he came upon the pretty scene.

Well mounted, he sat his horse with the ease of one reared in the saddle.

Possessing a fine physique, his form was rendered still more attractive by being clad in the undress uniform of a cavalry officer of the United States Army.

His face was frank, fearless and handsome, and altogether he was just the man to catch the eye of a maiden.

"It's hardly fair, for they don't see me; but I can't help it," he said, half-aloud.

Then, as though to excuse himself the more for gazing upon the pretty scene, he added:



"And I really fear that daring girl will venture beyond her strength."

Hardly had he uttered the words when from the fair lips of the brave swimmer came a cry for help.

A perfect chorus of shrieks arose, and yet not one dared venture out to the aid of the drowning girl, who had suddenly looked shoreward, and, appalled at the distance the undertow had carried her out, had felt her inability to reach the shore and had cried for help.

Another chorus of shrieks arose from the girls, as they saw a horseman urge his horse down the steep bank, at the risk of life and limb to both, and dash toward the roaring breakers.

The horse paused as he reached the waves; but the spurs sunk deep into his flanks, and with a snort of pain and fear he dashed into the wild seas.

"Bear up bravely! I'll soon reach you!"

The cheering words were heard far above the roar of the surf, and breathlessly the crowd of girls stood on the shore biding the result, while Madame Rosini, white-faced and with clasped hands, seemed uttering prayers for the rescue of Ruth Lonsdale, the best loved of all her pupils, the beauty of the school and the heiress to Cedar Hall, the grandest old estate on the banks of the Hudson.

Through the waves went the frightened, but gallant horse, and his rider guided him with steady hand and low-spoken words of encouragement.

Ruth Lonsdale saw him approaching, and it gave her courage to fight for life, though her nerve had nearly deserted her.

She had not meant to go out so far, but the treacherous undertow had carried her away very quickly, where she had not suspected it.

"One moment more, miss, and you are safe," cried the young soldier, as he saw the large eyes turned pleadingly toward him.

And as she gazed appealingly upon the young soldier coming to her rescue, Ruth Lonsdale saw that his left arm was carried in a sling, and that thus crippled he had come to her aid.

Even in her great peril she saw his dark, handsome face bent on her with determination to save her or die with her, and she made a desperate struggle to reach him.

A moment more and he grasped her hand, drew her toward him, and said:

"Take my place in the saddle, miss, and my horse will carry you ashore."

"And you, sir?"

"Will follow."

"But you are crippled."

"It matters not; I can swim back, though I could not have come out alone."

"But, sir—"

"Do as I say!"

It was not a request, but a command, and she obeyed, and as she drew herself upon the saddle he turned the horse's head shoreward.

The animal swam rapidly toward the shore, while a scream of delight went up from the girls on the beach.

And in the wake of the horse came the young soldier, swimming with a bold, strong stroke, and apparent ease, though with but one arm!

As the horse reached the surf Ruth Lonsdale looked back.

She saw that her brave rescuer was yet some distance away, and instantly she decided to act.

She was rested now; a life seemed in danger to which she owed her own, and she would not be the one to forsake him.

Instantly she slipped from the saddle and the horse went on alone, while her comrades gave another cry of horror, not knowing her intention.

But they saw her bravely buffeting the waves and holding her own, while she waited for the coming of the young soldier.

"Go ashore, miss! Do not wait for me, for I am all right," he cried, seeing her act.

"I will not, sir! I will wait for you," was her plucky response.

And again a breathless silence fell on those ashore, and all watched, waited and prayed.

Nearer and nearer came the bold swimmer, but Ruth Lonsdale seemed to feel that he was struggling for life, and she swam toward him and said:

"Let me aid you, sir, for I am strong and brave, now."

"Thank you."

And she gave him what assistance she could, and the next instant a huge wave carried them in to a footing on the sands.

"But for your aid, miss, I could not have reached the shore, for I have a wounded arm and my clothes and shoes weighted me down, so we are quits," he said, with a smile, while the two walked ashore where the young officer was at once surrounded by more beautiful faces and forms than it had ever been his good fortune to gaze on before.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE WIFE'S SECRET.

FROM that rescue from the sea of Ruth Lonsdale by the daring of the wounded soldier, who

carried in his arm a bullet from the rifle of an Indian warrior, the scene changes back to the home of Grayson Glyndon.

The silence that followed the crack of the pistol and the shivering of the lamp to atoms was intense, while the darkness seemed almost tangible.

The husband, Grayson Glyndon, who had so unexpectedly come upon the scene, to find his wife's hand in the grasp of another, his kiss burning upon it, stood like a statue, obeying the stern command of the unknown speaker to do so, but the young officer, Douglas Drew, felt his arm seized and he was drawn out into the hall, and thence through the open front door upon the piazza.

"Go quickly! and never again cross the threshold of Grayson Glyndon's home," said the one who had so unceremoniously dragged him from the room.

"Who are you?" asked Lieutenant Drew, striving in the darkness to see who it was that thus addressed him.

"One who just saved you from death and is entitled to obedience—go!"

"As you place my actions upon that footing, I obey."

"I thank you, sir, and bid you good-night."

The young soldier spoke haughtily, raised his hat politely and descended the broad steps to the grounds, quickly disappearing in the shadow of the trees.

In the mean time Grayson Glyndon had stood like a statue for full a moment, remembering the stern, threatening words:

"Move from where you stand, and you die!"

But the young wife, after the first moment of alarm, and impressed by the darkness and the silence, moved quickly to the bell and rung for a servant.

A butler promptly appeared, and she called out:

"Bring lights here at once, Maddox."

"Yes, lady; but has the lamp gone out?"

"You see that we are in darkness, sir."

"Yes, lady," and Maddox hastened into the dining-room and returned with the lamp from there.

"Place it there on the table, and then pick up that broken glass," and Ruth Glyndon gave a hasty glance about the room to see who was present.

Her husband had sunk into a chair near, and no one else was present.

The lieutenant and the one who had fired the shot that had shattered the lamp, had disappeared silently and mysteriously.

Maddox looked amazed, but he saw in the face of his mistress a look that brooked no questions, and he hastily swept up the glass, and removing the shattered lamp disappeared.

Meanwhile Ruth had stood silently regarding his movements, not even casting a glance toward her husband, who kept his seat in silence, though apparently nervous at what had occurred.

As Maddox disappeared, Grayson Glyndon looked up and said:

"Madam, your accomplice, as well as your lover, have disappeared."

"Grayson, I have neither lover nor accomplice, and I will brook no insult from you," and her voice had a firm tone, a trifle threatening, he thought.

"Who was the one who fired the shot and saved your lover, for I would have killed him, after what I saw?"

"I know no more than do you who it was that fired the shot that saved the life of Lieutenant Drew; but I thank him from my inmost soul, as he saved you from becoming a murderer."

"He saved me from killing a man who confessed himself in love with my wife—ay, and whom she said she had loved," he said, savagely.

"I did love him, Grayson, but that was in the past, and I am your wife now," and her voice quivered.

"Yet you received him as a visitor?"

"No, I did not dream of his coming."

"Granted; but who was the other one?"

"I know not."

"Ruth, you are keeping something back from me."

"Upon my honor, no."

"You mean that you do not know who it was that fired that shot, and threatened me with death?"

"I do not."

"You know, but you will not tell."

"I said upon my honor I did not."

"Was it not another lover of yours, one who was here before Drew came?"

"Indeed, no."

"Where did you know this Lieutenant Drew?"

"I met him when I was a school-girl, one day when Madame Rosini took us to the beach to spend the day. We were in bathing, the sea was very rough, and I was borne beyond my depth and was drowning, when Lieutenant Drew, who was riding on horseback along the shore, dashed his horse into the surf, reached me just in time and saved my life, though he

nearly lost his own life in doing so, as he was wounded in the arm at the time.

"Madame Rosini invited him to call, when he came to the city, and he did so several times."

"Go on."

"I have nothing more to tell."

"You have a secret from me, Ruth."

"I have told you all there is to tell."

"You love him?"

She was silent, and he repeated:

"Confess it; you love him!"

"Grayson Glyndon, do not insult me because you have the power to do so. I am your wife, sir, and as such would allow no love in my heart for another man."

"Well said, my haughty beauty; but you have a secret in your heart you will not tell me."

She gazed at him an instant, as though about to speak in angry tones; but, checking the impulse, she smiled, and turning quickly swept from the room, while he muttered:

"She has a secret from me, and I will ferret it out, ay, and know, too, who it is that prevented me from taking the life of that soldier and uttered that threat against me."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### FERRET, THE DETECTIVE.

GRAYSON GLYNDON was a popular man with all who knew him, and yet there was not any one who was his intimate friend.

Asked about his antecedents, none of his friends knew aught, but they had heard that he was from New England somewhere, and had come to New York to make his fortune as a lawyer.

He had "hung out his shingle" as such, and at the same time business had drifted in his way, unknown though he was, and it was when going to Albany on a legal matter that he had saved Colonel Lonsdale and his daughter from being lost on the burning steamer.

After his marriage to Ruth, Glyndon still kept his law-office down-town and was wont to go there daily.

He was a handsome man, a good talker, yet a trifle austere and reserved, and a favorite at the several fashionable clubs to which he belonged, for he gave excellent dinners at his elegant home, and his beautiful wife was admired by all who knew her.

That there was a "skeleton" in the Glyndon family closet no one had a thought, and until he had come home that night and found Lieutenant Douglas Drew with his wife he had not suspected that she had a secret in her heart.

Of a jealous nature, and not understanding all, while he heard just enough to arouse his anger, he had entered the room with murderous intent in his heart.

That he would, in his jealous frenzy, have taken the young officer's life, there is little doubt, had it not been for that mysterious shot from out on the piazza, which shattered the lamp, left the room in darkness, and held him under the muzzle of a weapon held in unknown hands.

The more he thought of the matter, the more Grayson Glyndon was mystified.

That his wife knew who had fired the shot he could not but believe, though she denied so doing, and he felt a desire to learn the secret.

"I will know all, and I'll set the hounds of the law going to-morrow to track down the mystery."

"I must work with care, for I do not wish to be known in the matter, so I will go to that new Secret Service Agency, which I saw the sign of yesterday."

So said Grayson Glyndon, and having made up his mind as to his course, his conduct toward his wife was the same as before.

But the next day he went to an office on the door of which was a sign reading:

"FRANK FERRET,

Secret Service Agent."

He opened the door and entered.

There was a suite of several rooms, and at a desk in the first one sat a young man who turned as he entered and took him in at a glance.

"Is Mr. Ferret in?" asked Glyndon.

"Yes, sir; your name, please?"

"Tell him that a lawyer wishes to see him."

The youth disappeared into an inner room and in a moment returned, asking Glyndon to follow him.

In the inner office, which was a most comfortably fitted-up room, sat a man with gray hair and beard, both worn long, and a dark, piercing eye.

He was one to command respect at a glance, and the lawyer said, politely:

"Mr. Ferret, I believe?"

"Yes, sir, and who have I the honor of receiving?" was the courtly reply.

"I prefer to remain unknown, sir, at least at present."

"As you please, sir; but you have business with me?"

"Yes, I have work for you to do."

"Secret Service work, of course?"

"Yes, and of a delicate nature."



"All such work, sir, should be delicately done."

"Do you know Lawyer Grayson Glyndon, sir?"

"I have heard of him, but do not personally know him."

"Well, sir, I desire to ascertain matters concerning his wife, and wish you to find them out for me."

"You are a lawyer, sir?"

"Yes."

"You represent the husband of the lady, then, of course, as it is about the wife you wish to make certain discoveries?"

"Well, yes."

"What would you know, sir?"

"She married Glyndon at the bedside of her dying father, and her husband had no reason to doubt that she loved him until lately."

"How lately?"

"Last night."

"Ah!"

"And what caused doubts, then?"

"He returned home to find a young army officer there, and in his jealous rage would perhaps have killed him, had not a mysterious shot come from out upon the piazza, shattered the lamp and thus allowed the officer to depart under cover of the darkness and excitement that followed."

"Well?"

"Mr. Glyndon regretted his hasty and mad action the moment it was done; but he found out that his wife had before met this officer, and he wishes her now put under surveillance, and also to ascertain who it was who fired this mysterious shot."

"That can be done, Mr. Glyndon, I think."

"You call me Glyndon, sir?" said the lawyer, starting and coloring.

"Yes, for your face would betray you as acting in this matter for yourself, did not the monogram on your seal ring of 'G. G.' do so," was the quiet reply.

"I may as well own up, sir; but will you undertake this matter for me?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you will have to find out where this officer is and have him shadowed."

"His name, please?"

"Douglas Drew, and he is a cavalry lieutenant."

The detective wrote down the name, and then Glyndon asked:

"Name your price, sir."

"I will hand you a bill of expenses, Mr. Glyndon, when I discover what you wish," was the reply.

Grayson left the room, impressed in spite of himself with the detective chief.

As soon as he had gone the detective touched a bell and a man appeared.

Writing a few lines he handed the paper to him and said:

"Obey these orders."

The man bowed and disappeared, and the detective touched the bell twice, and in response a second man appeared.

Something else was written and handed to him with the same words, and he, too, left the room.

A third time the bell was rung, three strokes, and the same thing occurred, and after the departure of the third man the chief arose and left his office, passing out by another door than that by which Glyndon had entered, and through a room where sat half a dozen men, all of whom rose and saluted him in silence as he went through.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE WATER WOLVES.

A SMALL, weather-stained sloop ran down the Hudson River, late on the day following the storm that shattered the large tree shading the grave of Colonel Lonsdale by a lightning-stroke, and dropped anchor in the East River, opposite the lower part of New York City.

There were but two men visible on the sloop, and these had an anxious, almost scared look, and as soon as the anchor was let fall, went into the little cabin and remained there until dark.

Then they came on deck, lighted a lantern and swung it in the rigging, locked the cabin doors and went ashore in a small boat.

The men had the appearance of ordinary seamen at a glance, though a study of their faces would indicate those whose lives were familiar with crime, for there was none of the look of the honest tar about them.

They seemed to sneak along the streets after landing, and turned into a low lodging-house, over the door of which was the contradictory sign:

"THE SEAMAN'S PARADISE."

"Clean, comfortable beds for ten cents per night."

"The best of meals only twenty cents."

"BETTY BINNACLE."

"Landlady."

The house was a three-story, tumble-down building, that, fifty years before, had been the abode of one of the aristocratic families of New

York, but which age, abuse and want of repair had made a rookery of.

The "restaurant" and bar were in the basement, and the entrance to the house was through that dingy place, for the front door and windows, on a level with the street, had been nailed up for years, as Mistress Betty wished to see all who came in and went out of her house.

And it was in the restaurant, as she called the dingy cellar, that Betty reigned supreme, and collected all sums for lodgings and meals, in advance.

As the two men from the sloop entered, Betty Binnacle sat upon her throne, which consisted of an easy-chair raised upon a drygoods box behind the bar, which gave her an eye over the two rather pretty girls who served as waitresses, and her red-headed son, who was the bartender, for the landlady was wont to say that one and all needed watching.

"Well, Captain Kit, you are back again, I see. You, too, Buster; but where is Bill?" demanded Betty, as the two seamen entered the cellar, where at the time several rough-looking men were sampling the meals referred to on the sign without.

Mistress Betty was fair, fat and forty, wore a becoming cap, and was not ill-looking, though she had a face stamped with avariciousness and cunning, while the color of her nose rivaled the paint on her cheeks in its rosy hue.

She wore diamond earrings, and her fingers were covered with rings set with gems of considerable value.

"Yes, we are back again, Buster and me, and Bill didn't come. Give us a drink, Mistress Betty, for we need it," replied the man addressed as Captain Kit.

"There's something gone wrong, Kit, for I see it," said Betty, in a meaning whisper.

"Yes," was the sullen reply.

"What is it?"

"Oh, you'll know to-night, when the Wolves come to the den, so wait until then, and let us have something to drink and to eat now."

"All right; only tell me where Bill is!"

"Dead!" was the whispered reply.

The woman turned pale, and asked:

"Did no bluecoats follow you here?"

"No, hain't seen none, and 'twasn't the cops as got away with Bill."

"Who, then?"

"Hum!" and the man pointed his hand impressively up to Heaven, while Betty crossed herself in an awed kind of way, and asking no more questions called to one of the girls to bring drinks to the two seamen.

The girl, known as Brunette, on account of her raven-black hair and large, deer-like eyes, brought some liquor and glasses, and asked:

"Where's Bill, Kit?"

"He didn't come back with us, Brunette," was the evasive answer, while Buster added:

"He's got to lay low for a while, Brunette," and at the significant joke both men laughed boisterously.

"Is he nabbed?" asked the girl.

"No, girl, so don't worry, for he'll turn up all right—at the Day o' Judgment."

He added the last words as the girl walked away.

As for the Widow Betty, she seemed stunned by what she had heard, and kept very quiet, though her eyes were busy the while looking after her pecuniary interests.

After having eaten their supper, the two men followed Betty out of the saloon into a narrow hallway that seemed to terminate at the rear wall of the house.

But, from some secret agency, known to Betty, the seemingly massive wall suddenly turned, as though on a pivot, and the two men entered the narrow aperture upon either side and found themselves in another narrow hallway, at the end of which were steps descending into underground depths no one would have ever suspected of being beneath that old mansion.

The wall, in fact, was a dummy, bricked up upon one side, to appear solid, and an ingenious piece of machinery that turned aside at the touch of a finger upon a spring.

Leaving Betty outside, the two men descended the steps of stone and came to a massive iron door on which one of them gave a peculiar rap.

It was opened at once by a dried-up specimen of humanity in the shape of a little old man, who ushered them into a large underground room, with pipes running up the sides to give air into the dungeon-like place.

The sides were shelved up and filled with plunder of all kinds, from silks to clothing, and a strong box at one end was marked "jewelry."

Two swinging lamps, upon either side of a desk, gave light to the place, and in front of it was a coffin, resting upon a bier, and upon it a hangman's rope, a cross and a Bible.

In front of the coffin and raised desk were a number of seats capable of accommodating half a hundred men.

There were fully a score of men, and a hard-looking set they were, then congregated in the somber place as the two men, Kit and Buster, entered, and by another door than that they had come in others were stealthily entering.

A dread silence was upon all, which added to the gloom of the underground chamber.

Suddenly a black curtain which hung behind the arm-chair and desk, and upon the sable folds of which were fastened a human skull and cross-bones, was drawn aside and a man appeared.

As he did so all present arose and bowed in silence.

This person was a man of fine physique, but what his face was no one knew, as it was masked.

"Rats!" he called out, in a deep, not unmusical voice, and the little dried-up old man, who seemed to be doorkeeper, sprang forward and said:

"Here, sir."

"Are the Water Wolves all present?"

"Yes, sir, excepting those off on special duty."

"Then we will hear the report of the men sent to open the grave of Colonel Lonsdale, for I see two of them present. Where is the third?" and the eyes peering through the mask seemed to be searching every face present.

## CHAPTER X.

### GUIDED BY DESTINY.

AFTER his breakfast in the little cottage home where dwelt old Thurber and his wife, Lionel Lonsdale signified his intention to depart.

"But where are you going, Master Lionel?" urged old Polly, who had dearly loved the young man from his infancy.

"Away from here, good Polly, for there is only gloom about the old place, and besides, I have no claim here."

"It's a shame that you have not, sir, all the same."

"Well, Polly, my father doubtless felt that he was doing right, and I will not utter a word against his memory. But there is one thing I wish you to promise me, Polly."

"It's made, the promise is, sir, before you ask it."

"I do not wish you to speak to any one, not even to my sister, should you see her, of my having been here."

"I'll not, sir, nor shall Thurber," replied the woman, with the air of one who knew she was ruler in her family.

"Thank you, Polly, and I will now take my leave, but some day you will see me again, I hope."

Lionel then left the cottage, asking Thurber to row him down the river to a point below where he could catch a boat for the city.

They went together to the landing, where was a skiff which the old man used for fishing, and seizing the oars, while Lionel took a seat in the stern, Thurber drew rapidly out of the little cove and headed down the river, for it was the desire of the young wanderer to take a boat at a point several miles below, where he would not risk recognition by any one who had known him in his boyhood.

As the boat went swiftly along under the strong strokes of Thurber, Lionel sat gloomily in the stern, his mind evidently filled with bitter thoughts.

The boat was winding down the shore, close in to a high bank, along which ran the highway that bordered the river, now and then approaching close to the water's edge.

"Some one is riding rapidly along the road, Thurber—too rapidly for that dangerous turn above," said Lionel, as the rapid clatter of hoofs came to their ears.

"Yes, sir, the turn is uncommon sharp just there, and a horse can hardly round it coming at that pace, with a rider on his back," replied Thurber, and he rested upon his oars.

Nearer and nearer came the clattering hoofs, then they seemed almost overhead, a cry rung out and a horse shot into view over the cliff.

"My God! I feared it! and a woman is on his back!" cried Lionel, in a tone of alarm.

Over the cliff had come a horse, wild-eyed, snorting in terror, while upon his back was a young girl.

It was an appalling spectacle, and for an instant seemed to unnerve Lionel, for he gazed upon her like one bereft of motion.

Still seated in her saddle, clinging to reins and saddle-horn, but white-faced as though dead, and seeming to feel that her despairing shriek had been her death-cry, was the young girl, dashing down from the dizzy height.

A wild cry from the horse, a tremendous blow against the waters, a dashing of spray, and the animal and his rider disappeared beneath the flood.

An instant later Lionel sprang into the river, having cast aside his boots and coat, and swimming toward the spot, he seized in his strong grasp the form of the rider as she arose to the surface, having been torn from her saddle by the waters.

She was conscious, but, unable to swim, would have drowned but for the young man, who, with a few strong strokes, reached the skiff, in which sat old Thurber, completely dazed.

"Come, old man, aid the lady into the boat," called out Lionel, sternly, and recalled to action, Thurber seized the maiden and drew her into the skiff.



Young Lonsdale quickly followed, while the maiden said, anxiously:

"My poor Vim, he is drowned, I fear, but he ran away with me and thus caused his own death."

"The shock of the fall doubtless killed him, miss, while he broke the force of your fall—Ah! there he rises, and he is dead!" and Lionel pointed to where the horse came in view some rods away down the river.

But he again sunk, and the young man asked:

"May I inquire where I can take you, miss?"

"I am Miss Cassidy, sir—a daughter of Judge Cassidy, and my home is a mile below, sir; but I have been so remiss as not to tell you how I appreciate your noble act, for but for you, sir, I would now be dead," and she extended her hand in a frank way that showed that she meant what she said.

Young Lonsdale could not but grasp the little gloved hand.

"I was fortunate in being near, Miss Cassidy, and am happy in having served you," was the reply, and he gazed with admiration upon the face before him.

It was a beautiful face, innocent and full of spirit and refinement, while her form, to which her neat riding-habit closely clung, was the perfection of symmetry and grace.

She was just across the threshold of eighteen years, and one to fascinate with her beauty and sincerity.

She saw that the one who had rescued her was a gentleman, and his dark face won upon her, as she stole a glance at it now and then from under her long eyelashes, and she wondered that he had not told her his name, when she had made known hers.

As he did not do so, she said, as the boat ran in toward a landing, beyond which were lovely grounds, with a grand stone mansion in the background:

"Here is my home, sir, and I am sorry my father is not at home to thank the preserver of his daughter's life; but if you will give me your name and address, sir, father will be most happy to call, and I assure you we will always have a welcome for you at Stone Vale, which your courage has prevented from becoming a house of mourning."

She held out her hand as she spoke, and Lionel aided her to spring ashore, while he said in something of an embarrassed way:

"I am a stranger here, Miss Cassidy, so will not be able to give you any address. I hope that you will not suffer from your involuntary plunge."

He raised his hat as he spoke, muttered a word of farewell and sprung back into the boat, shoving it off as he did so, while Jule Cassidy, hurt by his refusal to give his name, stood gazing at him in silence as Thurber pulled rapidly away, evidently urged to do so by a low command from the young man.

"Remember, Thurber, not a word of what has happened, or it will come out who I am," warned Lionel, as the boat headed on down the stream.

"No, sir, I'll not speak of it, sir; but, Master Lionel, but for you the young lady would have lost her life."

"Yes; but who is she, Thurber?"

"Judge Cassidy's daughter, sir."

"So she said."

"But they are strangers on the river, sir, the judge having lately purchased Stone Vale estate."

"Well, there is the landing, and I'll just catch the boat yonder coming down. Here is a souvenir for you, Thurber, and you have my address if there is anything to communicate; but not a word about my having come home, or of the man killed by lightning while robbing my father's grave."

"I'll be as silent as the grave itself, sir; but maybe you can't afford to be so liberal, Master Lionel, for you've given me a snug sum here."

"Keep it, Thurber, and good-by!" and as the young man spoke he sprung ashore, and soon after he was on board the steamboat bound for the city, his clothes having dried sufficiently as not to attract attention.

As he stood apart from others on the boat, he muttered to himself:

"There is a strange fatality in all this—my return home, that Pointing Finger amid the foliage, and pointing down upon my father's grave, the lightning-stroke that I beheld, the one that came in the night and killed that ghoul, that strange dream or vision I had in the old mansion, and my being right under the cliff to save that young girl's life—yes, it is all most strange, and some mysterious destiny is guiding me, and I will follow it to the end, be that end what it may."

## CHAPTER XI.

### FOILED.

SURPRISED at the manner of Lionel Lonsdale, and that he had refused her his name, Jule Cassidy turned as the boat rowed away, and hastening to the house was soon in her own room, for she felt chilled after her unexpected plunge in the river.

Her maid and the housekeeper soon learned of her miraculous escape, and of the loss of

Vim, the blooded horse, which was a late present to her from her father, and an animal which had proven to be anything but the docile creature his former owner had represented him to be.

Having taken a warm drink which the housekeeper had prepared for her, and changed her clothes, Jule felt no effects from her fright and ducking, and book in hand strolled out to the little arbor on the river-bank, and which was a favorite resort of hers.

But, though she held the book open before her, she was not reading, her eyes being fixed as though looking into the bygone.

At last her musing words showed of what she was thinking.

"How strange that he would not tell me his name! Can it be that he is other than he seems—some one who is guilty of a crime and needs must hide his name?"

"Oh, no; I cannot believe it of him, for he was so brave, so noble, and that handsome face is not stamped with crime, surely. It must be that he wished to avoid the thanks of my father."

"He is a man of striking presence, and his dark, sunburnt face and splendid eyes seem to haunt me; but I do not wonder at it, when I owe to him my life."

She was silent a moment, and then said, as a shudder swept over her frame:

"Oh, how near I was to death!"

As she spoke she raised her eyes, for the sound of oars fell upon her ears.

There, going by not far from the shore, she beheld a boat with a single oarsman.

"It is the same boat and the old man; but he is not there!"

Raising her voice and waving her handkerchief as she stepped out of the arbor, she called out:

"Ho, the boat! Ho, my man! Come ashore, please!"

Old Thurber stopped rowing at the hail, saw the maiden, and turned the prow of the boat shoreward, while he muttered:

"It's the young lady, that's certain, and now I've got to tell a lie, that is equally certain."

As he reached the shore Jule Cassidy was there to meet him, and said pleasantly:

"Where is the gentleman, my good man, who saved my life?"

"He took the steamer for the city, miss."

"Come, wait here for me a minute, as I have something to say to you."

Ere Thurber could reply she had bounded away toward the mansion.

Ten minutes after she returned, and he had gone and was out of sight around a wooded point not far above.

"He has gone! This shows that he, too, would not be known. There is some mystery about this, but I'll not be foiled. I will follow him."

A light skiff, her own pretty shell, was tied to the little pier, and springing into it, she seized the oars and sent it flying up the river at a speed that showed the expert oarswoman.

Thurber had not expected to be followed, so when he rounded the point he pulled at a leisurely pace, until, to his surprise, he saw a light skiff shoot into sight.

"It's that young lady that we pulled out of the river! I dare not run, or she'd suspect something, so I'll have to wait."

So saying he rested on his oars, and a moment after the skiff came flying up to him.

"I asked you to wait, my man, and you ran off," said Miss Cassidy in an inquiring tone.

"Yes, miss, but I was afraid you wanted to pay me, and so I didn't wish to take anything," was old Thurber's reply, half-hoping that was her intention.

"You are as modest as was the young gentleman with you; but may I ask his name?"

"I can't tell you, miss, for he didn't tell me."

"Ah, you do not know him then?"

"He came to where I live, above here, miss, and asked me to row him down to the steamboat landing, and I did so."

"I am sorry you cannot tell me more of him, for I owe my life to his courage, and to you, also, and I hope you will not at least refuse to accept this little token of my appreciation," and she handed to him a silk purse heavy with gold.

"Oh, miss! I don't wish pay for what I did not do."

"Had you not rowed the young gentleman down the landing, he would not have been there to save me, so to you also I owe my life."

This reasoning seemed to convince Thurber, who had a great weakness for the possession of money, and he said:

"Well, miss, I'm more than glad that I brought him, and I thank you most kindly."

"And if you can find out for me who the gentleman is, and anything about him, as to where he lives and what his occupation is, I will duplicate that purse, which has just two hundred dollars in it."

"Oh, miss!" and Thurber nearly gasped for breath, for he had supposed the purse to contain silver, and had been trying to see through the silk meshes whether it was white or yellow metal within.

"You may be able to find out for me, and if you do come to my house and tell me. But what is your name, may I ask?"

"Ben Thurber, miss."

"Where do you live?"

"Several miles up the river, at Cedar Hall."

"Ah! at that grand old house, and which I have heard is haunted?"

"I live in the gardener's cottage, a little way off from the mansion, miss, for I would not pass a night in the big house for much more than you have given me here."

"Then it is haunted?" said Jule Cassidy, with a smile.

"Indeed it is, miss."

"Well, Thurber, I will ride up to see you some day to ascertain if you have discovered anything more as to the one who saved my life," and with a word of good-by Miss Cassidy turned her boat and rowed back to her home, muttering to herself in a determined way:

"Somehow I believe that man is deceiving me, and does know who the one is who saved me."

"But I shall find out, as his is not a face to forget."

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE TABLES TURNED.

STANDING in a secluded part of the steamer, upon which he had taken passage to New York, Lionel Lonsdale seemed to be watching for some object upon the river.

Every vessel that the steamer sped by he took a survey of, and at last, as the city lay just ahead, his eyes fell upon a small craft not very far ahead, and keeping well over toward the Jersey shore.

"It is the sloop," he muttered, and he did not take his eyes off of her until the steamer ran in to her dock down-town.

The wind was not very strong, and the sloop was going along at a rate of four knots an hour and heading down toward the harbor.

Having landed, Lionel called a hackman, and taking him to the end of the pier, said:

"Do you see yonder little sloop?"

"Yes, sir."

"Keep her in sight as far as the Battery, and if she goes on down the harbor halt. If she runs up into the East River, still follow her."

"Yes, sir."

"If she runs in to a pier, or anchors, keep your eye upon her and halt some distance off."

"Yes, sir; I'll do it."

Returning to the hack Lonsdale entered it, the driver mounted upon the box, and following the sloop he went down West street at a pace that enabled him to keep the little craft constantly in sight.

The sloop, as the reader has seen, for it was the one that Lionel had marked so well in the morning as leaving the cove near his father's grave, rounded the Battery and ran up the East River to an anchorage.

The hackman stopped, and paying him liberally Lonsdale dismissed him, while he kept an eye upon the sloop.

He saw the craft made ship-shape and the two men land and walk away; but he was upon their track and noticed them enter the Seaman's Paradise.

"I dare not go in there, dressed as I now am; but I will not be foiled," he muttered.

He walked along the street till he came to a second-hand clothing store, which he entered.

A pair of overalls, a pea-jacket and a sailor's cap, drawn on over his clothing, and his white shirt hidden beneath a blue woolen one, made him appear like a seafaring man.

Then he returned and entered the Seaman's Paradise, and was at once spied by Mistress Betty, who called to Blonde to serve him.

"What'll you have, cap'n?" mechanically said Blonde, who was a pretty, sad-eyed girl whose refined face seemed sadly out of place in that evil den.

"A bottle of your very best wine, my lassie," answered Lonsdale.

At this Blonde spruced up, for one who ordered wine must have money, and she soon brought it with a glass, which she took care should be rubbed clean.

In looking about him Lonsdale had seen the two men whom he had tracked there, and that they appeared to be at home in the place he readily discovered.

Soon after they arose and left the room, going out by an inner door, and, unwilling to taste the vile concoction which Mistress Betty put in wine bottles, he watched his opportunity and emptied the glasses on the sawdust-covered floor.

Seeing that her bottle was growing empty, and that her visitor was a stranger, Mistress Betty left her "throne" and came and took a seat at the table, while she said:

"I see that you are a stranger, sir, and I allus make it a point to give such welcome to my house. Been long in the city, sir?"

"No, I only just arrived, miss."

"So I judges, as you carries a sachel; but, don't you want pleasant quarters and good living while you are here, for I have the best?"

"Well, I have not gone elsewhere for quarters, miss, and if you can give me a good room I have the money to pay."



"You shall have the best, and at ten dollars a week, which is cheap."

"I don't complain of the price, miss, if the room is good."

"A seaman, I take it?"

"Yes, and from a long voyage."

"Then you doubtless have got your pay all with you, so you'd better let me lock it up in my safe for you, as you might be robbed, as this is a wicked town."

"So I've heard."

"You don't know it then?"

"Haven't been here for a great many years."

"Then take my advice, for I speak as one who knows, and be careful who you trust, for maybe you have enough about you to make it worth while to wicked men to take your life to get it."

"I've got considerable money, miss, and when I go to my room I'll fix up a package for you to keep for me, if you'll give me an envelope."

"Certain! I'll do all I can for you, for I like you, and I'd treat you as I'd do for my own brother, if he had money."

"I don't doubt it, miss, for your face shows it," was the dubious compliment.

Then Mistress Betty ordered a bottle, as "her treat," and bringing some envelopes left Lonsdale to drink the wine alone, for she said it was too early in the evening for her to indulge, when he invited her to share it with him.

At last he arose and Nick showed him to his room, which, as Mistress Betty said, was the best, causing him to say:

"Heaven have mercy upon those who occupy the worst."

Once in the room he put some worthless papers in one of the envelopes, and marked upon it:

"One thousand dollars."

"To be kept for Sharp."

It was not long before Mistress Betty knocked at the door, and said, as she opened it, before he could bid her enter:

"I came to see if you were comfortable, sir."

"Perfectly at home, miss," he replied, in perfect imitation of one who was under the influence of liquor.

"I hope you will ask for all you wish, sir, and if you have any friends who would like to live here also, I'll make a deduction in my price for you."

"I haven't a friend in the world, landlady."

"Oh, don't say that, sir, for I am your friend; but as I see that second bottle of wine was a little too much for you, perhaps you had better give me your valuables to put in the safe."

"That's so," was the answer, and the envelope was handed over, causing Mistress Betty's eyes to open wide when she saw the sum marked on the back.

"Now lie down and take a nap, sir, for you need it."

"I'll do so," and Lonsdale sunk down upon the uncomfortable bed, while Mistress Betty departed.

He heard her stand outside an instant, then, as he breathed hard, the door was locked and she went away.

Instantly he arose and discovered that the door could not be locked from the inside, while there was no window in the room, only a skylight overhead.

"I fear I've gotten into a scrape, in venturing into the den of the lioness," he muttered.

Soon after he heard a step in the hall, and at once threw himself upon the bed and feigned to be asleep.

The door opened and there entered softly Nick, the young man whom he had seen in the bar.

Nick came to the bed and felt his pulse, muttering:

"A good pulse for a man who took that drugged drink. It was not strong enough to settle him; but this will do it."

As he spoke he took a bottle from his pocket, drew out the cork and was about to pour the contents into the mouth of the supposed sleeper, when it was struck from his hand and fell upon the floor, shivering into atoms.

At the same instant the grasp of Lionel Lonsdale's strong hand was upon the throat of the intended murderer, and his left fist was driven several times, with telling force, into his face. "Doctor Nick," as he was called, for he had been a medical student, was taken by surprise, and, though a powerful fellow, he had more than met his match at the hands of the man whom he had deemed wholly in his power.

Rendered unconscious from the choking, and stunned by the blows, Nick was thrown upon the bed, and seizing his sachel, Lonsdale quickly placed the contents about his person and left the room.

Mistress Betty started and turned pale at sight of him, but he said in a well-assumed drunken way:

"I'm going to a drug store, miss, for I don't feel exactly right. I'll be back."

"No, let me send out and get what you wish."

"I'll get it myself," and so saying Lonsdale walked up the steps, Mistress Betty little dream-

ing that he had so cleverly outwitted her and mastered her son, until the latter appeared with swollen, bleeding face, and cried out:

"He nearly ended my life, mother!"

"We are ruined!" groaned Mistress Betty, in dire alarm.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE SECRET OF A GRAVE.

WHEN the one who appeared to be chief of the band of mysterious men, who met underground in that dismal chamber which was called "The Tomb," asked the question as to where was the third personage who had been sent off upon the secret mission to the grave of Colonel Lonsdale, all eyes were turned upon Captain Kit and Buster.

"Kit, where is Bruiser Bill?" sternly asked the chief.

"Dead, chief," was the solemn reply.

"Who killed him?" quietly asked the masked master, as all started at the response of Kit.

"It was the will of God!"

"Bah! what do you mean, sir?" was the stern query.

"Chief, I'll tell my story, sir, and you will see that it is not intended that we should rob that grave."

"Go on, sir," said the chief of the Water Wolves, but he was without doubt impressed by the manner of the man to whom he addressed his words.

"Chief, when you told us here that you knew there was a fortune in the grave of Colonel Lonsdale, and you wanted men to go and get it, bad as is our band of Water Wolves, it was no easy task to get those who would go, for you know the old superstition that he who robs a grave must hang."

"Come, what happened there?" sternly asked the masked chief.

"Bruiser Bill," continued Kit, in the same strain, "was the only man who would consent to open the grave, though Mate Buster and myself went with him."

"That we all know, and you have returned, and he is dead you say."

"Yes, sir, we are here, and he is dead."

"And what caused his death, I ask you?" impatiently said the chief.

"He took your map and the tools, when we ran into the little cove and landed him, and went alone to the grave."

"A storm was threatening, and soon it broke; but Bill did not return, and we turned in out of the wet and went to sleep."

"It was dawn when we awoke, and yet Bill had not returned. So we went ashore to look him up. We reached the hilltop and saw the little grave with the headstones in it, as you described to Bill, and going toward it discovered that a large tree had been struck by lightning, and there, lying upon it, where he had made but a few strokes with his shovel, lay Bruiser Bill."

"Dead?"

"Yes, sir."

"Struck by lightning?"

"Yes, chief."

"Well?"

"It was God's punishment upon him, and it just made Buster and me heartsick, and we ran away from the grave as quickly as possible."

"Fools! cowards! Why did you not open the grave yourselves?"

"Touch that grave? Never!"

"Not for a million," said Buster.

"Well, you acted like cowards, and fools, too, for I have reason to know that that grave contains that which will bring to us vast riches."

"I wouldn't touch a dollar I got from it," declared Kit, firmly.

"Who will, then?" asked the chief, and his eyes read the faces before him.

Not a man spoke, and again came the question:

"Who of you will go and rob that grave, I ask?"

Still no reply.

"Chief, we were seen leaving the place by some one, for he hailed us as we were under way, and we crowded on all sail."

"Do you think that he discovered the body of Bruiser Bill?"

"I am sure of it, for he went back toward the grave."

"Are you sure that Bill was dead?"

"Oh, yes, for his shovel and lantern were twisted up by the lightning, and his face was black."

The chief tapped impatiently upon the desk before him, and no one spoke until the silence was most impressive.

Then he said:

"Well, I want a man to go to the spot and see if Bill's body has been buried, or is still there, for it is a desolate place and few go there. Who will go?"

No one answered.

"A hundred dollars to the man who will go to that spot and get the information I need."

Not a voice rose in reply, and, with a muttered imprecation the chief said:

"You are as brave as lions and vicious as tigers when it comes to facing a foe, fighting the law hounds and committing a burglary; but let it be to go near a dead body, or a grave, you

are as cowardly as jackals, and your superstition governs you wholly."

"Well, I will have to go myself, I see, and solve the secret that hangs about this grave. Who have reports to make?"

Thus the chief dismissed the subject, and at the last question the men promptly responded, coming up one by one and reporting certain transactions of an illegal matter entered into, burglaries committed and other deeds of a guilty character.

Dismissing the band, the chief turned and disappeared through the sable curtains, the bones fastened thereon rattling ominously together as he did so.

On the other side of the curtains was a narrow hall, or cellarway, with what appeared to be massive brick pillars to support the structure overhead; but, by touching a certain brick in one of these pillars, which was some three feet in diameter, it slowly began to descend into the flooring, revealing the fact that it was wood-work cased in brick, and with a small iron ladder running up through it.

When it had descended so that the top was level with his shoulders, the chief sprang upon it and stepped upon the ladder, and as he ascended the pillar rose into position once more.

Ascending the ladder, which led up a chimney to the top floor of a house that fronted upon the street back of the one upon which stood Mistress Betty's tavern, the chief touched a spring and what appeared to be a wall swung open like a door, revealing a closet, into which he stepped.

Closing the aperture behind him, no one would have suspected that the closet wall, upon which hung wearing apparel of various kinds, was otherwise than solid.

Opening the glass door of the closet, the man stepped out into a luxuriously furnished room, where sat a person in an easy-chair.

It was a young girl of perhaps twenty-two, with a face that was handsome, yet hardly womanly, for it was haughty, cold and almost stern.

Still it was a face to command admiration, almost awe, and her form was exquisite in its perfection.

She was engaged in reading a novel, and glanced up without surprise as the man entered, while she said, in a languid way, that seemed natural to her:

"You are back soon, King."

"Yes, there was little to do to-night, though much to hear," and the man threw himself into an easy-chair, pinched off the end of a cigar, and, removing his mask, settled himself for a smoke to quiet himself, for he seemed in ill-humor.

"Anything gone wrong?" asked the woman, with a shade of anxiety.

"Yes, Queen, the cruise of the Owl failed."

"How so?"

"A streak of lightning killed Bill Bolton while he was digging into the grave."

The woman's face flushed, and then paled, while she said:

"Can this be true?"

"Why, you look as scared over it as did those ignorant tools of mine."

"And you are not free from superstition about that grave, King, and this does look as though it was not intended that we should have the—"

"Bah! I will not be turned from my path for that for which I have sinned so deeply and plotted so long. There is a vast sum hidden somewhere, and that we must have."

"If it is to be found. But for the madness of that poor man, Patsey Belt, you—"

"I beg you not to speak of him, for I wish to forget that man's face."

"Can you?"

"No! no! I would to God I could; but this hidden fortune left by Colonel Lonsdale must be found, so bring your woman's wit to bear on some plot, be it what it may, that we can get it."

"I will do all I can, as you know, King; but are you going so soon?" and, as she spoke, the man sprang to his feet.

"I must—good-night, and expect me to-morrow," and taking a key from his pocket, he unlocked a drawer of a writing-desk, taking out a wig and false beard, which he put on.

They had both been made with such skill that no one would have suspected them of being false, and thus disguised, he took up a slouch hat and left the room and the house, descending by way of a well-carpeted stairway, and entering the street through a handsomely furnished hall.

As he departed from the room, the woman touched a bell, and in response a maid-servant appeared.

"Chispa, I will have my supper now."

"Yes, my lady, and the master?"

"He has just gone and will not be here for supper," and the woman returned to her novel as Chispa, her maid, departed.

But though her eyes were upon the book, her thoughts were elsewhere, as she murmured aloud:

"Yes, that hidden fortune of Lonsdale's must be found at any cost, for the shadow of death is ever before us in this struggling life we now lead."



## CHAPTER XIV.

## AN ASSASSIN'S FATE.

"Boy, don't stand like a fool, but tell me what has happened?" gasped Mistress Betty Binnacle, when her son Nick suddenly appeared before her, his face bleeding and bloated from the choking he had received at the hands of Lionel Lonsdale.

"Where is he?" gasped Nick, speaking with a great effort.

"Gone to the drug-store after medicine."

"Gone to the police court after cops, you mean."

"Why did you not kill him, as I ordered?" almost yelled the woman.

"Because he almost killed me."

"Bah! you are strong as a giant, and—"

"He is stronger, for he handled me like a child; but don't talk here, for it was your fault not to have the wine drugged, so as to fix him."

"We are ruined," groaned Mistress Betty, and the two girls began to cry.

"Silence, you idiots, and tell me where Stiletto is," cried Nick.

"In his bunk, asleep."

"Tell him to come here, and one of you girls go with him and show him the stranger, and I'll take another way and look for him, for he cannot be gone far."

"And if you find him?" fiercely said Mistress Betty.

"I'll knife him!" was the savage response, and as he uttered the words Blonde appeared with a villainous-faced Italian, who appeared to have just been aroused from slumber.

"Stiletto, go with Blonde and she'll point you out a man to knife."

"Yes," simply said the Italian, and he left the saloon with the girl, who hastily seized her hat and a wrap.

Washing his face, Nick Binnacle also departed on the search for the man who had so readily mastered him, and his mother, leaving Brunette to look after the restaurant and saloon, which just then had no customer in it, retired into her private office, a small eight-by-ten caddy, from which there was a secret way leading out into the street by an underground passage through another rickety old house, for Madam Binnacle was not one to be caught in a hole like a fox, from which there was no exit.

That she was anxious her face revealed, for she feared that those on the track of the bold stranger might not find him.

It was true, if the officers of the law came to her home, so well covered up were her tracks, they could find nothing more than that she kept a place so low that were a man the proprietor it would be regarded with suspicion.

But, though criminals had been tracked to the Seaman's Paradise and arrested, they were not supposed to be in any way connected with the landlady or she interested in them.

Whatever she fed her stranger guests upon and gave them to drink, Mistress Betty always had a "private bottle" and a "tempting snack" for the policeman whose "beat" was near her home.

He was not forgotten on his birthday either, and on Christmas a number of presents were always forced upon him to take home to the children.

In this way the woman had gotten the name of being poor, but honest, and possessing a good heart, and so she kept her place in order for legal inspection, excepting its secret recesses which were known to herself only and the members of the band of Water Wolves.

But Mistress Binnacle now felt nervous, for she feared that the stranger might go at once to police headquarters and report that he had been drugged in the Seaman's Paradise and an attempt had been made to assassinate him by her bartender.

So she sat down in her "office" to consider whether it was best for her to take her valuables from the safe and seek a hiding-place, or to remain and arrange some plot to defend herself.

In times of danger she thought quickly, and her face brightened as she said:

"I have it!"

Just then Nick appeared in the doorway of the office and said:

"You have what, mother?"

"A way out of our trouble."

"Well, out with it, for I could not find the man, so came back to say we had better git."

"And Stiletto?"

"Has not returned."

"Well, Nick, I'm going to sacrifice you."

"Mother!"

"Don't get scared, for I mean to play a deep game, and be ready for the cops, if they come. You are a bad boy, and I have had great trouble with you, so that you are bringing my gray hairs in sorrow to the grave."

"Mother!"

"Silence, you fool, and hear me! You asked me for money and I refused, and knowing that stranger had money you sought to rob him, even if you had to kill him; but he was too much for you, and learning what you had done from your own lips, I determined to give you up to the cops, and—"

"Mother, you are crazy."

"No, I've got sense, and it would have been

more to your credit had you resembled me instead of your vagabond father.

"But I will have you seized and held for the cops, when they come, and then, my son, you may be sure I'll get you out of jail before you have been there twenty-four hours, and you shall have a snug little sum to enjoy yourself for a few months in travel, and come back in disguise when it's all blown over."

"Nick, my son, it pains your poor mother's heart to seize you, but you must be seized. Here, let me tie your hands and sit there in the chair."

"Old lady, you've got a head bigger than Queen Victoria's, and I'll do as you say; only don't forget to get me out, if they nab me."

"I'll not forget you, my son—now!"

She bound him quickly in the chair and then as she heard steps on the stairs leading down into the saloon ran out to face the police, whom she expected had come.

Upon arriving in the saloon, Mistress Betty discovered that those who entered were a party of half-drunken sailors, and turning them over to the care of Brunette, she took her seat, and began to rub her eyes to give them the appearance of being red from weeping, when the officers should arrive, that they might see how deeply it cut her heart to have to give her son up as a thief and intended murderer.

By the time that she had gotten a look of woe well fixed upon her face, other steps were heard upon the stairs, and she glanced quickly toward the door.

But she beheld only Blonde enter the saloon, and the girl's face was white and frightened, while she seemed to walk with an effort.

"Come in here," she cried, grasping the girl's arm and dragging her into the little office where the unworthy Nick sat a prisoner.

"Satan! what's up, for you look scared out of your wits!" cried Nick, as he caught sight of Blonde's face.

Without reply the girl sunk down into a chair, and Nick cried:

"Give her some liquor; quick! or she'll faint."

The woman sprung out of the room and returned with a bottle and glass.

"Not that, for it's the liquor you sell, and it will kill a cat. Get your own bottle!"

Mistress Betty obeyed by springing to a closet and getting therefrom a bottle of Cognac.

Pouring out some in the glass she gave it to Blonde, who eagerly swallowed it.

In a moment she seemed to get control of herself, and gasped forth:

"Oh! such a scene!"

"What was it?" cried Nick.

"He is dead!"

"Who, the stranger?"

"Yes."

In chorus from mother and son came a fervent exclamation of thanks.

Then Nick said:

"I thought that bloodhound Stiletto would track him down."

"Yes, he is as true as his own steel," the woman said in an admiring tone, while Nick asked:

"You are sure about it, Blonde?"

"Yes."

"You saw him die?"

"Yes, both of them."

"Both of who?" cried Mistress Betty.

"Stiletto and the stranger."

"Is Stiletto dead?"

The wicked woman and her son asked the question in one breath.

"Yes."

"For Heaven's sake tell us about it, girl, and don't sit like a dummy staring at us."

With an effort the girl said:

"We went out together, and going rapidly I soon saw the stranger ahead, just passing under a gaslight. He walked straight down toward the dock and out upon the pier, off which the little Owl lies at anchor. There he stopped and stood gazing out over the waters."

"I had pointed him out to Stiletto, who quickly took a look about him, to see that no one was near, and then glided toward the end of the dock where the stranger stood."

"I tried to turn back, but I could not, for I was impelled to follow Stiletto, and I saw that he seemed to glide, rather than walk."

"The stranger stood, with his arms folded, I think, upon the very edge of the dock, gazing out over the river and seeming to be lost in thought, rather than to be looking at anything."

"Up behind him slipped the Italian, and I saw the glitter of his knife in the starlight as he raised his arm to give the deadly blow."

"Then I heard the thud as the knife fell, and the next instant I saw the stranger half-turn, grasp Stiletto in his arms, and the two fell with a heavy plunge into the river."

Mistress Betty uttered an exclamation of horror, while Nick said:

"The Italian's gone sure, for he could not swim a stroke."

"I ran to the end of the dock," continued the girl, "and gazed over."

"The water was foaming, but no forms were in sight."

"I waited, gazing down in terror, one, two, three minutes, but no one rose to the surface,

and, almost fainting, I turned and ran for home, and never can I forget the sight I saw," and the girl shuddered violently as she covered her face with her hands, as though to shut out the remembrance of that cruel assassination which she had witnessed.

## CHAPTER XV.

## AN UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER.

As has doubtless been surmised by the reader, Ruth Glyndon, the beautiful wife of Grayson Glyndon and the sister of Lionel Lonsdale, was as much amazed at the sudden shot from out on the piazza and what followed as was her husband and the young cavalry lieutenant, Douglas Drew.

The scenes had rushed so quickly upon her that she was almost unnerved, for, while seated in her luxurious home, her thoughts had been upon the past, and the memory of Douglas Drew, her soldier lover, came before her, causing her to sing the ballad which had been answered by the unexpected presence of the one of whom she was thinking.

Then came the startling entrance of her husband, his murderous intent, the shot from the darkness without, the departure of the soldier, and her being left alone with her husband, all were so sudden, so strange, that for a moment she was bewildered.

Ruth was, however, possessed of a strong nature and a wonderful nerve for one of her years, and she hastily commanded herself and held the conversation that followed with her husband when Maddox, the butler, had brought a lamp.

The next morning, calm and unruffled she greeted her husband at the breakfast-table, while he, determined to set a watch upon the actions of his wife and Douglas Drew, assumed a manner toward her he was far from feeling.

After Grayson Glyndon had departed for his office, Ruth decided upon a horseback ride in the Park, hoping that it would help her to shake off the "blues," which she felt she had to an extent she had not before known.

So she mounted her favorite riding horse and set off alone, declining the services of the groom who was generally her attendant.

With something of the same feeling, and without the slightest hope or expectation of meeting Ruth, Douglas Drew had decided upon a ride on horseback, and had secured a horse at a stable and started for a gallop in the Park.

A detective upon the track of one or the other would hardly have been convinced that this meeting which followed had not been planned.

But wholly innocent of the other's intention, each had gone for a ride, and both had reined up with a sudden start, when, in a secluded bridle-path in the Park they had met face to face.

Ruth's face, flushed with exercise, had paled suddenly, while the young soldier's face had flushed with pleasure.

"Ruth, this is indeed an unexpected pleasure," he said, riding up to her side, hat in hand.

"Do not call me Ruth, for I am a wife, Lieutenant Drew, and I must beg of you to leave me, for we must not meet again."

"I will obey your command, Ruth—I beg pardon, Mrs. Glyndon, after this meeting; but I wish again to hear from your lips if you received my letter when I was called away, or not."

"I told you last night that I had not."

"And yet I wrote you that though on leave, I had no idea of allowing my regiment to go against the Indians without me, so hastily left to join them."

"So I wrote you, telling you of my love for you, and how I begged for your love in return and the promise that you would some day become my wife."

"I am a wife now, and you must not talk to me so."

"I am simply telling you what I wrote then, though I cannot but add that I can never love but one woman, and—"

"Sh—! don't say that, but let me tell you that had I received your letter I would not now be Ruth Glyndon."

"I believed that you did not care for me, and, because my father urged it, I married Grayson Glyndon."

"I married him before my dying father, and he has been a good, kind husband to me, and I must be content with my lot."

"Now, let me bid you good-by, and ask you never to cross my path again."

She held out her hand as she spoke, but drew it back quickly, as she saw a horseman approaching.

He was a man well-mounted, rode with the air of one accustomed to the saddle, and had a dark, handsome face, a long, drooping mustache, and his black hair fell upon his shoulders, so long did he wear it.

His eyes were dark and penetrating, and he turned them first upon the young officer and then upon Ruth, and they seemed to fairly read her very soul, as she afterward thought.

When he had passed, Lieutenant Drew remarked:



"A fine-looking man that, evidently a foreigner, and a perfect horseman."

"Yes, and what eyes he has; it seems that I have met him before."

"Perhaps; but tell me, please, Mrs. Glyndon, who it was that I owed my life to last night?"

"I do not know, I assure you."

"Was it not a remarkable circumstance?"

"Most remarkable; but it was all a mystery to me, from your coming."

"I came, for I had heard of your marriage, and I wished to meet you again, to see if you had forgotten me."

"I had ascended the steps and was about to ring, when your voice in song checked me, and stepping to the open window I heard your words, so made bold to answer by my presence."

"Some one, it seems, was coming along the walk just then, and that must have been your husband, or the one who shivered the lamp by his well-aimed shot; but how determined Mr. Glyndon was to kill me!"

"He seemed maddened by sight of you, and I never saw him so moved before."

"I do not wonder at him, but I would give much to know who it was that saved me from his wrath."

"And so would I; but let us part now—Ah! there comes that horseman again."

Again the horseman appeared in view, and, as he drew near, he raised his hat and said in a pleasant voice:

"Pardon, sir, but may I ask if this path leads over to the main drive?"

"It does, sir, by taking the bridle-path to the left a hundred yards further on," answered the soldier.

"I thank you, sir, and pardon my troubling you," and with a bow the stranger rode on.

"Ruth."

"Mrs. Glyndon."

"I stand corrected, madam; but I was going to say that in the hasty glance I had of the one who saved my life last night, yonder stranger does not look unlike him, and his coming before us twice here almost causes me to feel that he is one and the same."

"Oh! who can he be?" cried Ruth, in no little alarm.

"That I do not know; but, as you dismiss me, and I am going his way, I will try and find out."

"But do you demand that this be our last meeting?"

"I do."

"I can but prove my love for you by obeying your command, so I will bid you farewell."

He held out his hand and she grasped it without a word.

Then she struck her horse a sharp blow, and the spirited animal bounded forward, startled and angry at such unaccustomed treatment.

With her eyes blinded with tears, she was about to give him the rein, when she heard the cry of Douglas Drew:

"For God's sake, Ruth, don't let him get the best of you."

With a strength he could hardly believe her possessed of, she reined the animal down to a slow canter, and, with a wave of her hand, went on her way.

Seeing that she had gained control over the animal, the soldier rode on after the strange horseman, whose face seemed to haunt him.

#### CHAPTER XVI.

##### A SOLDIER'S HONOR.

WHEN Lieutenant Drew rode after the horseman, whom he was now assured he had seen before, he was anxious to find out if he was, or was not mistaken in his belief that he was the one who had led him away from the Glyndon mansion on the night before.

He found the stranger riding quietly along the bridle-path, and seeing who it was that came up behind him, he raised his hat to the young officer.

"Pardon me, sir, but have we not met before?" asked Douglas Drew politely.

"Perhaps, sir, but I have no recollection of having ever been presented to you, sir, and I am a good recaller of faces," was the reply.

"Then I am mistaken; but it seemed that we had met before and in this city."

"I have been here but a very short while, sir, and I am a stranger," was the reply.

"Then I am mistaken, sir, and beg your pardon," and Douglas Drew rode on, the stranger politely returning his bow.

"I still feel that I have seen him somewhere," muttered the soldier, and in no very pleasant frame of mind he returned to his hotel and began to pace his room; his brow clouded and mouth stern from the thoughts that crowded upon him.

At last he said, half-aloud:

"My duty is clear, and that is to return at once to my regiment and try to forget Ruth."

Oh, that she had received my letter, how different would have been our lives, for I feel that she loves me, bound though she is to another.

Believing this, my honor as a soldier bids me obey her command and go far from her.

"I have loved her from the moment I saved

her from death in the ocean, and I had built up so many air-castles of which she was the queen.

"But they are shattered to the earth, and I can but remember her as one dead to me forever."

"But how strange that she did not get that letter."

"I sent it to her home, to Cedar Hall, and she should have received it."

"But she did not, and hence all my sorrow, and hers, as I believe."

"And that mysterious shot last night?"

"What did it mean?"

"Who fired it, for in the surprise of the moment, and the darkness, I did not really observe the man, more than to see that he was strangely alike the one whom I saw in the Park today."

"I would like this mystery solved, and also to know what became of my letter to Ruth."

"I pledged my word to go from her, and I will do so; but I will place the affair in the hands of a Secret Service agent before I depart, and, cost what it will, this mystery shall be cleared up."

"What a handsome man her husband is, and how wild with rage he was; but then, if he knew her heart and mine, he would not be jealous."

"He has been good to her, she says, and God grant he may so continue."

Thus mused the noble young soldier, until the day passed away.

With a few boon companions he managed to pass several days in a round of gayeties, but they all seemed to notice that his pleasure seemed forced, and he determined, as he could better drown thought out on the border, to start again for his regiment.

"Go with us to the opera to-night, Drew," urged his friends, and, as he meant to depart the day after, he consented.

He had attended in full uniform, for it was a grand full-dress night, and the party had a box.

Hardly had he taken his seat and glanced over the house leisurely, when at last his eyes fell upon the box opposite the one in which he sat.

Instantly he started and his face flushed.

He saw there Ruth and several others, and a tall form standing behind her chair, had his glass leveled upon him.

It was her husband.

That she had discovered him, the young soldier knew, and that he was under the close scrutiny of her husband he could feel.

"He will believe that I came to this box on purpose, and I much fear me so will she, to see them, having found out they were coming to the opera."

"It must not be," and so saying he rose to depart, while one of his friends said:

"Drew, yonder is the handsomest woman in New York, a mere child-wife, and she has her eyes upon you, for a uniform always captures a lady."

"Yes, and her husband has his eyes upon you too, Drew," said another.

"It is Mrs. Grayson Glyndon, a lady as lovely in character as in face and form, and her husband is to be envied," remarked another of the young men.

Douglas Drew made no reply to their words, but, having drawn on his light overcoat over his uniform, said, in a quiet way:

"I am going to ask you to excuse me for awhile, and perhaps for the evening, for I have just thought of a matter that commands my attention."

"Dine with me, all of you, at my hotel to-morrow at six."

"Going to see the adorable prima donna, eh?"

"No, for I do not know her."

Firmly refusing all requests to remain, Douglas Drew left the box.

As he passed along the theater wall toward the door he glanced over his shoulder and saw that the eyes of Ruth were following him.

"Can she think that I intend to visit her box?" he said, with a flush of anger.

Then a second look showed him that Grayson Glyndon had also left the box and was hastening toward the door.

"I hope he will not make a scene here, for it will but rebound upon her innocent head," he muttered, seeming to divine that Grayson Glyndon meant to speak with him.

As he neared the door the curtain rose, and the eyes of all were at once turned upon the stage.

"One moment, sir," and Douglas Drew, turning, beheld Grayson Glyndon behind him.

"Mr. Glyndon, I believe," he said, calmly.

"Yes; and you are Captain Douglas Drew?"

"No, a lieutenant only—Douglas Drew though is my name, sir."

"After what occurred last night I have a right to demand satisfaction of you, sir," fairly hissed the jealous husband.

"Mr. Glyndon, when you entered the room last night I had been but a moment in the presence of your wife."

"I had not seen her before for more than a year, and to-morrow I leave New York to remain on the frontier for a long time."

"Will you not, for her sake, let your jealous

anger toward me cool down, and let us part in peace?"

The young officer had spoken with a calm impressiveness that was very manly, and but for his jealousy, Grayson Glyndon would have heeded; but he did not, for he replied:

"I hardly think, sir, large as is this world, that it can contain both of us, unless one fills merely a grave upon it."

"As you please, sir, to so look at the matter, I will meet you upon one condition."

"Name it."

"That we meet secretly, with swords, and may the best man win."

"With seconds, of course?"

"I should prefer not, sir."

"This must be a duel, sir, not murder."

"You put it strongly, so I accept."

"My hotel is the New York, and I shall be at home to-night after ten, and to-morrow up to ten, to meet your friend."

"Good-night, Mr. Glyndon," and as Douglas Drew turned away, he came face to face upon one who had stood near, the folds of a heavy portiere having hidden him from view.

#### CHAPTER XVII.

##### A LETTER.

THE one whom Douglas Drew so suddenly confronted, was not seen by Grayson Glyndon, who had turned upon his heel at the last words, as though to return to his box.

There had been no one else near the two, and what had been said was in a low tone, and had attracted no attention, especially as the orchestra drowned their voices.

The person that had stood near the portiere, which concealed him, had evidently heard all, and yet, if an eavesdropper, it did not seem that he was intentionally so.

At sight of him the soldier started, then raised his hat and seemed about to pass on, when the stranger said in a polite way:

"I ask pardon, sir, but I was compelled to hear what was said just now, and your manly behavior causes me to wish to serve as your friend, though we are strangers to each other, if you will accept my services, for I am not wholly unacquainted with the code in affairs of honor."

To almost any other man Douglas Drew would have given an angry reply; but the one before him commanded respect, his words commanded attention.

So he responded:

"We are strangers, sir, considering our acquaintance dating back only from our meeting a week ago in the Park, but I will be glad to accept your offer, as I would rather have a stranger act for me than one who is my friend."

"My name is Douglas Drew, sir, and I am a lieutenant of the Fifth United States Cavalry."

"And here is my card, Lieutenant Drew," and the stranger handed his card, upon which, by a hasty glance, the officer read:

"MARCO DEL MONTE,  
Mexico."

"I am glad to offer my hand in friendship, Señor Del Monte."

"Will you take supper with me after the opera to-night, at my hotel, the New York?"

"With pleasure, sir," and they parted.

Going to a stationery store, Douglas Drew asked for paper and envelope, and wrote as follows:

"Believe me, it was an accident that I was in the box opposite to you to-night, and not intentional, for I knew not of your coming."

"I hope to start to my regiment to-morrow night; but whatever happens, feel that I did my duty only."

"With every kind wish for your happiness,

"Ever your friend,

"DOUGLAS DREW."

"P. S. I will leave this in hands to reach you, so that there will be no compromise of you."

Leaving the store, the officer found a hack and drove to the mansion of Grayson Glyndon.

Stopping the driver outside the gate, and bidding him wait, he entered the grounds, and his ring was answered by Maddox, in all the glory of his livery, for Grayson Glyndon was always anxious to keep up the grandest style in his house and with his servants.

"I am sorry, sir, but both the master and his lady have gone, they having gone to the opera," said Maddox, whose Cockney English was most refreshing to listen to.

"Well, my man, I have a letter here for Mrs. Glyndon, from an old friend, and I wish it to reach her hands only, so perhaps you will see that it does?"

A twenty-dollar gold-piece was slipped into the hand of the delighted butler, who said, eagerly:

"She shall have it, sir, and I thank you most heartily for your remembrance of me."

"And perhaps you had better not mention my calling, for I will see Mr. Glyndon to-morrow, and prefer a surprise."

"Has you please, sir, and I will not, sir, God bless you," and Maddox bent low as Douglas Drew walked away, while he muttered:

"Now that gentleman his a prince in disguise."

"And who is he, I wonder?"

"Maybe his madam's long-lost brother Hi



"Have 'eard about, come 'ome, hand 'e wishes to surprise 'er," and Maddox hung close to his letter until Ruth returned, and fortunately alone, for her husband had ordered the carriage sent back for him to his club.

"A royal gentleman, my leddy, was 'ere to see you, and left this note, which was to reach your 'ands only, my leddy," said Maddox. Ruth started, took the note, and asked quickly:

"When was he here, Maddox?"

"About nine o'clock, my leddy."

"For whom did he ask?"

"For the master hand yourself, my leddy."

"You told him we were at the opera?"

"Yes, my leddy, and he said as 'ow I was to give you that note, and to say nothing of his coming, for he was an old friend, and would surprise you."

Ruth saw that the butler held no suspicion that it was a note she should not receive, so she hastened away to her room and eagerly perused it.

"Poor fellow, he did not wish me to misunderstand him, and I did, for it seemed that he had gone to that box on purpose," and that night, ere she went to sleep, Ruth wept bitter, scalding tears as she thought of what

"Might have been."

She heard her husband come home and go to his room, and when she arose the next morning her maid told her that Grayson Glyndon had arisen at dawn and gone off in a carriage which had called for him, and it flashed upon her why he had gone, for she murmured to herself:

"He left the box when Douglas left his, and I am sure met him in front of the theater."

"Then his letter said, 'whatever happens, feel that I did my duty only.'"

"Can it be that they are to meet?"

"God have mercy upon me if it is so!" and the sorrowing wife sunk down upon a sofa almost in a swoon at the thought.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### MERCILESS.

UPON his return from the Glyndon mansion, Douglas Drew went directly to his hotel, took off his full-dress uniform, and in an easy fatigue suit lighted a cigar and sat down to await the coming of the Señor Marco Del Monte, who was to be his second in the meeting which Grayson Glyndon had forced upon him.

Promptly on time Señor Del Monte's card came up, and the young officer greeted him cordially.

"I have ordered supper in my parlor here, Señor Del Monte, as it is more homelike, and I expect Glyndon's friend will call to-night."

"It is better, Señor Drew," was the reply, and the lieutenant noticed that though his guest spoke English perfectly, he yet had a slight accent.

The servant had not yet brought the supper, when a card came up.

"It read:

"KENT CASSIDY."

He was shown up by a call-boy, and Douglas Drew saw that he was a handsome young man, a trifle overdressed, and bearing the marks of a fast life stamped upon his face.

His manners were courtly, and he said, with a pleasant smile:

"I am sorry, Lieutenant Drew, to make your acquaintance under disagreeable circumstances; but I represent my friend, Mr. Grayson Glyndon, who has some quarrel with you, the cause of which he begged me not to ask him, and I am empowered to challenge you to meet him."

"I am glad to meet you, Mr. Cassidy, and permit me to present my friend, Señor Del Monte."

The Mexican bowed haughtily, and Kent Cassidy also checked a somewhat cordial greeting and returned the bow coldly.

"I regret that Mr. Glyndon has sought a quarrel with me, for it had been better otherwise; but I will meet him, as he desires, and Señor Del Monte will represent me, sir," resumed Douglas Drew, and he walked over to the window and glanced down into the street.

A moment after, Señor Del Monte called to him with:

"Señor Cassidy says, that as his friend is a civilian, and you a soldier, accustomed to the sword, he must beg your indulgence as the challenged party and ask you to select pistols."

"As you please, gentlemen, so it be an appeal to swords if an exchange of shots should be without result and Mr. Glyndon demands a second meeting."

And so it was arranged, Kent Cassidy taking a glass of wine with his guest and fellow-second, after which he departed to go to the club, where Grayson Glyndon awaited him.

"Well?" said Glyndon eagerly, as Kent Cassidy entered.

"To-morrow morning on Washington Heights on the Hudson, at sunrise, weapons pistols, and swords if they fall the first shot."

"My arm never fails, Cassidy, but I would have preferred swords as less dangerous to myself, for I am a master with the blade."

"I feared you were not, so requested pistols, as you were to meet a soldier."

"And he yielded?"

"With perfect indifference, for he is a cool fellow, Glyndon."

"Doubtless; but who is his second?"

"A Mexican, handsome as a picture, haughty as a king, and who has the musical name of Marco Del Monte."

"He wears a diamond in his shirt-front worth a fortune, and its mate on the little finger of his left hand; but let us have a drink, and then I am booked for a game of cards, so I will call for you in time in the morning, as I shall play all night."

And Kent Cassidy, a fast young man, a brother of the beautiful girl whom Lionel Lonsdale had saved from drowning, went to a card-room to involve himself still deeper in debt by his reckless gambling, for his dissipated career was a cause of deep sorrow to his father and sister.

When he arose from the table, he owed a thousand dollars more, and, with a muttered curse he ordered a carriage, drove to his room and changed his toilet, after which he called for Grayson Glyndon. When the carriage drew up not very far from the secluded spot selected for the meeting, another vehicle was already there, and the Señor Del Monte and Lieutenant Drew were standing upon the wooded hillside gazing at the beautiful scenery, just lighting up under the rays of the rising sun.

The four greeted each other politely, and without ado the seconds arranged the preliminaries, two very elegant dueling-pistols furnished by Señor Del Monte being selected for use, while a pair of blades, also belonging to the Mexican, were held in reserve.

The toss was then made for which one was to have the first fire, for it had been arranged so, and if he who fired first missed, his foe was to have his shot.

It was won by Kent Cassidy for his man, and he said lightly:

"If I could only have the same luck for myself with cards."

The principals then took their stands, Señor Del Monte acting with the air of one who had passed through just such scenes before, and in another toss he won the word to fire.

"That looks like first fire, miss, second fire count," muttered Kent Cassidy to himself, who looked at everything from a gambling standpoint.

"Gentlemen, are you ready?"

The deep voice of Señor Marco Del Monte rung out stern and clear in the crisp morning air.

"I am ready," was Douglas Drew's quick response, while Grayson Glyndon said, almost impatiently:

"Yes."

"Señor Glyndon, you have the first shot," called out the referee.

The pistol of Grayson Glyndon rose quickly, and his face was pale, stern and merciless as he brought his aim full upon the soldier, who stood upright, motionless, and as unmoved as though upon parade, his right hand grasping the pistol that hung by his side.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### A PRECIOUS PAIR.

"Now set me free, mother, for as Stiletto killed that stranger, there is no need to play any farce, with me acting as the star, for the cops will not come."

So said Nick Binnacle to his mother, after Blonde had told her story of the murder of the stranger by Stiletto, and the fate of the assassin.

"You are sure, Blonde, that they were both drowned?" asked the cautious Mistress Betty, for her caution had been her safety thus far.

"I saw Stiletto drive his knife deep into his back, as I told you, ma'am, and then, before he could spring back, the man grasped him and dragged him over the dock with him."

"You heard the plunge?"

"Yes, ma'am, and the water splashed clear up on the dock, for it was wet."

"And you saw no sign of them?"

"They never rose to the surface, and I was there a long time."

"It is easy enough to believe, mother, for the man was, as I have reason to remember, a most powerful fellow, and he got Stiletto in his dying grip and they went down to the bottom together."

"We'll watch the papers to see when their bodies turn up, if they do, for they may be carried out into the Sound by the tide, or into the ocean."

"Well, I only hope he is dead, but I am sorry for Stiletto," said Mistress Betty.

"So am I, for he was useful; but come, Blonde, take another glass of brandy, for you look white and scared yet, and then go out and look to the customers, for there are plenty in the shop."

Blonde refused the liquor but left the office, and Mistress Betty released her son from his bonds.

"I think you said that there was some money

the stranger left with you, to put in the safe?" said Nick.

"Yes, a thousand dollars."

"Nonsense!"

"It is true."

"I can't believe it."

"Well, I'll show you."

"He didn't look like one to have that much money."

"Well, he'd been on a long cruise he told me, and had saved up his cash."

"I tell you he had more than he gave me, for I saw it, and plenty more too."

"Well, we have struck it rich."

"And no blood on our hands, either."

"There would have been on mine if that fellow hadn't mastered me."

"My! but he was a giant in strength, and I'm no child, as you know, mother."

"Indeed, you are the best of them all, my son," said the mother, with pride in her son's great strength, and which was the only quality he possessed to be proud of.

"I wouldn't mind his life on my hands, mother, if I could have gotten the balance he had, for I am getting a trifle hardened in my conscience, I think."

"It was your studying of medicine and cutting up dead folks for scientific purposes which blunted your nerves, my son."

"Well, get out the money, mother, and let us count it over," said the young scamp, anxious to see the large sum left by the stranger.

Mistress Betty turned to with a triumphant air, arranged the "combination," at the same time taking very good care not to let her son see how she did it, and drew open the heavy door.

From a drawer she took out the package handed her by Lonsdale, and said:

"See there!"

"It reads one thousand, that's sure; but open it, mother."

She obeyed, and her face, excepting her red nose, became white with rage as she took out only scraps of paper.

"Curse him! he fooled you," said the young man, through his shut teeth.

"Yes; and I am glad he is dead, the villain," hissed Mistress Betty, furious to feel that she had been so cleverly deceived.

"What on earth did he do it for?" she asked, after a moment.

"Mother."

"Well?"

"Maybe he is a detective."

The woman started and said:

"What makes you think so?"

"He came here, and he was above the average of men who frequent your place, as I saw at a glance."

"So he was, Nicholas."

"He didn't get drugged by the two bottles he drank."

"No; and I wondered at it."

"He didn't drink 'em, I'll warrant," and the young man went out and examined the seat where Lonsdale had been.

In a moment he came back and said:

"He poured that liquor out of his glass, letting it run down the side of the wall into a crack in the floor."

"Oh Lord!" gasped the woman.

"He woke up too quick and grabbed me, to have been asleep, when I went to knife him, and I tell you I believe he was a detective."

"Looking for what, my son?"

"Seeing what he could find out about us, mother, and the dive, for you know there have been several men disappear mysteriously of late, and who were known to visit your place here, and—"

"Yes, I know, so don't refer to them, Nicholas," sternly said the woman.

"Well, I am sure he was a detective, so we have got to go slow, for though we need not fear him, he will be missed, and his companions may know where he went."

"That's so, my son, and we will be more particular."

"I'll lecture the girls, and tell the Water Wolves to be careful, for it makes me nervous to think we may be suspected of illegal practices."

"Yes, especially when we are guilty," was the response of the young man, and with a rude laugh he left the office, while Mistress Betty remained by no means in an enviable frame of mind, for she considered that she had lost a thousand dollars, and more, had made a mistake in her judgment of human nature, in taking the strange guest for what he had seemed to be.

## CHAPTER XX.

### MERCIFUL.

THE calm courage of Douglas Drew could not but win the admiration, even of his enemy, as he stood facing him with such fearless mien, awaiting the shot that might end his life the next moment.

His eyes were upon the man who he saw meant to kill him if he could, and the Señor Del Monte and Kent Cassidy gazed upon him with admiration at his superb nerve.

After a deliberate aim the flash came, and



with the report Douglas Drew was seen to step backward, and sway slightly, as though about to fall.

But he straightened up and took two steps back to his position, while he threw open his tightly-buttoned coat and drew from his vest his watch.

Then, in a calm voice, strangely distinct, came the words:

"Mr. Glyndon, your aim was true, but my watch interfered with its deadly intent."

"See, here is the bullet imbedded in the shattered time-piece and that I now give you your life, being merciful, where you were merciless, I will save you."

As he spoke he tossed the shattered watch up into the air some twenty feet, and quickly raising his pistol fired.

There was a ringing sound of metal striking metal, and the watch swerved from its direct downward course and was cleverly caught by Señor Del Monte, who cried out:

"The dearest shot I ever saw, and your mercifully sparing that gentleman's life is as manly as your aim is true."

"I thank you, sir; but shall we go?" quietly said the young soldier.

"I demand another meeting, sir," sternly called out Grayson Glyndon, who was annoyed at the mercy shown him by the man he wished dead.

Señor Del Monte stepped forward to interfere after what had occurred, but Douglas Drew checked him with the remark:

"I accede; but it must be with blades."

"As you please, señor," Del Monte responded, and he walked toward Kent Cassidy, who was trying to urge Glyndon against another meeting, and was heard to say:

"By Jove, Glyndon, but he gave you your life like the splendid fellow he is, and you have no right to force another fight upon him."

"Will you second me, or not?" was the angry reply.

"Of course, if it must be."

"Then get the blades, for that man is the devil if he is as good with those as with a pistol."

The seconds now held a conversation together, and Kent Cassidy was urging against a meeting; but Del Monte felt the most perfect confidence in the soldier after what he had seen, and said:

"Your principal demands it, Señor Cassidy, and mine a quiesces, so we must yield."

"So be it; but it is wrong in my man to force this further after receiving his life from Lieutenant Drew, and Glyndon is a superb hand, I hear, with a blade, and I would hate to see your gallant friend hurt."

"Thank you, señor," was the Mexican's reply, and the swords were taken from their scabbards and examined, both being found to be perfect matches, as Del Monte had told Kent Cassidy they were.

It was with an air of perfect confidence that Grayson Glyndon grasped his sword-hilt, as it was handed to him by Kent Cassidy, and his former defeat but made him the more determined to conquer the man, who he thought held the love of his wife.

He did not believe that his wife was untrue to him, even in thought, for he well knew her noble nature; but he felt that she had loved the soldier before she had met him, and that, though his wife, she still held the old affection for Douglas Drew, which might be fanned into a passion that was dangerous if she saw much of him.

"I can win her with that man out of the way," he muttered, and he was determined, therefore, to put him "out of the way" in the grave, if it were possible to do so.

With confidence in his skill as a swordsman, he did not believe he could find a master, and he crossed the blade of the officer with an intention to end the matter very quickly.

To his amazement, however, he was met with a strength of wrist that equaled his own, as he at once felt, and after a few passes he was compelled to admit that he was matched in skill.

When some of his finest feints were thwarted and his attack was met with perfect coolness, he had also to acknowledge a wonderful nerve in his opponent.

Angry at having met his match, he forced the fighting hard, and at last saw, as he believed, a chance to drive his blade through the very heart of the soldier.

To his horror he was foiled by a parry, and then, quick as a flash, the weapon of Douglas Drew was thrust through his arm.

The weapon fell from his grasp as the keen blade was withdrawn, and he turned livid as his arm felt powerless to his side.

"I was sorry to wound your friend, sir, but I saw that he meant to kill me, and disarming him would not have ended the combat, I fear, hence I disabled him."

"Can I render any service?" and Douglas Drew turned to Kent Cassidy, who had been waved back by Grayson Glyndon, when he sprung to his side.

"No, thank you, but I wish I had brought a surgeon," was the answer.

"Permit me to offer myself, señor, as I have

studied surgery, and can at least stop the flow of blood," said Del Monte, stepping forward.

As he was bleeding freely, Grayson Glyndon submitted to have his wound dressed by the Mexican, who did it with dispatch and skill, and then, simply bowing in response to the thanks of the others, walked rapidly away after Douglas Drew, who had gone on to his carriage.

"You are merciful, Señor Drew, most merciful, for that man tried hard to take your life; but may I keep your shattered watch as a souvenir of our friendship, and ask you to let me replace it by one you will wear as a reminder of your Mexican friend?"

The request was so cordially made that Douglas Drew returned:

"With pleasure, señor, though I will be the one to get the better of the bargain, although my watch was a good one, and it saved my life, for Glyndon aimed to kill."

"He certainly did," was the response, and the carriage drawing up at the hotel soon after, Marco Del Monte accepted the invitation of the young lieutenant to breakfast with him, after which, pleading an engagement, he gave him an address where a letter would reach him at any time, and bade him farewell with the remark:

"I shall not forget the watch, Señor Drew."

As those who had been actors in the deed were sworn to secrecy, the friends of Douglas Drew, who had been in the box with him at the opera, had heard nothing of the affair, when they came to dine with him, and they made up a jolly party, drinking the health of the young soldier, who was to leave on the midnight train to rejoin his regiment.

As the dinner was ended a man entered with a small package and handed it to Douglas Drew, who breaking it open uttered an exclamation of surprise as a superb watch was revealed, with a chain of unique design attached. Upon the watch was engraven a gauntlet-covered hand grasping a sword, and around it the words:

"To Lieutenant Douglas Drew, from his friend, Marco Del Monte."

"What a princely gift!" cried Douglas Drew, amazed at the splendid present from his almost unknown friend.

"Worth a cool five hundred," said one of the party, looking at its intrinsic value.

"Who is he, Drew?" asked another.

Douglas Drew could not answer.

He did not know.

But he said:

"Oh, he's a Mexican friend of mine, who asked me to exchange watches with him, and I did so, with the advantage all on my side," and the lieutenant took a note just brought in to him.

He started as he opened it, and puffed the cigar-smoke about his face as he read:

"I know what happened this morning at Washington Heights."

"I thank you from my inmost heart that you spared his life."

"God forever bless you, and a last good-by."

The watch was placed in his vest pocket, the little farewell missive put securely away, and soon after Douglas Drew was returning to his regiment upon the far frontier bearing in his heart the memory of a lost love.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### RUTH PLAYING DETECTIVE.

RUTH had not eaten breakfast, when a carriage rolled up bringing her husband, who got out slowly, and ascended the steps to the piazza.

She saw that he carried his right arm in a sling, and she met him at the door, while she cried anxiously:

"Oh, tell me what has happened, Grayson, I beg of you?"

"Don't be alarmed, Ruth, for it is a mere fracture of my arm, which the doctor has set, and assures me will be all right within a week or two."

She saw that there was a bitterness behind his assumed tone of indifference, and hastily asked:

"But how did it occur?"

"We are all likely to fall at times, Ruth, and I got this injury when I least expected it; but I am hungry for breakfast, for I went for a drive early this morning to witness a very interesting little sporting event, which would not interest you were I to tell you of it."

He saw that her face wore an anxious look, and so he led her into the breakfast-room and endeavored to be cheerful.

But it was hard work, when the mental and physical pain he suffered are both taken into consideration, and he was glad enough to retire to his room and lie down soon after the meal was over.

When he dropped off to sleep Ruth went out of the room and ordered her carriage for a drive.

When she came down with her bonnet and wrap on, Maddox opened the door for her.

"Did you answer the early bell this morning, Maddox, when that carriage came for your master?"

"Yes, my lady, I did."

"Who was in the vehicle?"

"I noticed Mr. Kent Cassidy, my leddy."

"Any one else?"

"No, my leddy."

Ruth then entered her carriage, and said to the footman, who closed the door:

"Drive to Doctor Gerard's."

The vehicle soon drew up at the door of the fashionable doctor's home, and entering the parlor Ruth sent in her card.

Almost instantly she was ushered into the office, and the old doctor said in his suavest tones:

"My dear Mrs. Glyndon, what can I do to serve you this morning?"

"I am worried, doctor, about that wound my husband received, and came to ask you if you deemed it dangerous?"

"Not in the least, madam, though the blade passed clean through the arm, and it was lucky he caught it there rather than in the heart."

"But he told me he meant to tell you it was a fracture."

"And so he did, and I came, hoping to catch you off your guard, as I have done, and get the truth from you," and Ruth laughed.

The doctor looked blank, and then laughed, while he said:

"A woman may never catch fish, my dear Mrs. Glyndon, but she can catch a man every time, and I admit you netted me."

"I beg you won't speak of my having been here to ask you, doctor, but did you learn how the wound was made?"

"As I've let the cat out of the bag, madam, and it's to be a secret between us, I may as well say that it was in a fencing frolic at the club, as I understood it."

"I thank you, doctor, and I will not betray you."

"Please charge this as a professional visit," and Ruth laughed as the doctor ushered her out of the room.

"To the Park," she said, to the footman, and, as the carriage rolled away she muttered:

"I understand all now."

"It was a duel, and Grayson got worsted."

"He meant to kill Douglas Drew, who spared his life for my sake."

"He leaves to-night, so I heard one of the party who were in the box with him say as he came out of the opera; but I will write him a note to let him know how much I appreciate his noble act, for, were Grayson Glyndon to die by his hand it would kill me."

As the stylish Glyndon carriage, with its spirited horses, coachman and footman on the box and beautiful occupant leaning back upon the silk cushions, rolled through the Park, all eyes were turned upon it and upon Ruth Glyndon.

At last Ruth, who seemed attentively watching for some one, saw a gentleman approaching in a buggy, driving a handsome trotter.

She motioned with her fan, and, as he passed, slowly said:

"Return, please, Mr. Cassidy, and join me in an ice at the Retreat."

He bowed, and soon after drove up to the Retreat, where she was already seated at a small table, for it was "the fashion" then, as now, for ladies and gentlemen to alight and enjoy some light refreshment during their drive.

Kent Cassidy looked a little haggard after his night of dissipation and card-playing and the exciting incident of the morning; but he greatly admired Ruth, and approached her with a smile, pleased at her having asked him to return.

"Your fagged looks show early rising, Mr. Cassidy; but I am glad to tell you that Grayson's wound is not serious, the sword having touched no artery."

"You know all, then?" gasped the young man, caught as the doctor had been.

"I do know of a duel between one Douglas Drew, a lieutenant in the army, and my husband, this morning, and I wish to ask you the cause of the meeting?"

"Upon my honor, I do not know."

"You were my husband's second?"

"Yes," he said, in a low tone.

"And he told you no reason for the quarrel?"

"None, and said it was a secret between them."

"Who was Lieutenant Drew's second?"

"I merely know that he was a Mexican, Del Monte by name, and a handsome fellow and one who knew what he was about."

"Lieutenant Drew was not hurt?"

"No, and yes, for I think he must have been slightly so, when the bullet of your husband's pistol buried itself in his watch."

"It was a close call for him."

"I have a desire to hear your story of this affair, Mr. Cassidy, and I pledge you my word that I will not betray you, nor say that I have seen you."

"I will tell you then."

And he did tell all, his story reflecting more credit upon the soldier than her husband.

"I thank you, Mr. Cassidy," and having merely tasted the ice she had ordered, she arose and he escorted her to her carriage.

Thus it was, having, by her woman's wit discovered the truth, she wrote that farewell note to Douglas Drew.



CHAPTER XXII.  
THE GRAVE GHOULS.

OLD THURBER, the trusty servant at Cedar Hall, was seated upon a rustic bench, his favorite resort, one morning, smoking his after-breakfast pipe.

The scene about him was one of great beauty, for the river glistened in the moonlight, sails here and there dotted its surface, and a steamboat was also visible gliding swiftly along.

The old mansion arose grim and grand in the background, deserted and with the air of neglect and desolation hanging about it.

The walks were weed-grown, and a look of neglect was upon all, except the little cottage several hundred feet away, where dwelt the old man and his wife.

There the scene showed that human kind were about, for chickens roamed around, a dog lay on the door-mat, a cat was enjoying a nap in the sunshine, cows were visible in the barnyard and the old horse which the honest old servitor kept to jog to and from the village for supplies was grazing in the meadow, beyond which was the little clump of timber in which rested the ashes of the Lonsdales.

Suddenly the sound of hoofs aroused the old man from his reverie, and he saw a horsewoman coming at a swift gallop along the seldom-used gravel drive leading to the mansion.

He arose and went to the gate and opened it, just as she dashed up, and said with a pleasant smile:

"Good-morning, Master Thurber; you see I have tracked you to your lair."

It was Jule Cassidy, well mounted and looking very lovely in her well-fitting habit of dark-blue cloth and heavy black plume.

"Yes, miss, and if you'll light, the old lady will be glad to offer you a glass of milk, or a bite, if you wish it."

"No, thank you, I breakfasted before I left home, and, as my horse shows, came on here at a gallop all the way."

"But I will go up to the cabin, for I would like to meet your wife and tell her how you and Mr.—Mr.— What did you say his name was?"

"I didn't say, miss, for he didn't tell me."

Jule Cassidy was foiled, for she hoped to catch the old man off his guard; but she continued:

"Ah, yes, I remember, he was a stranger to you; but have you heard nothing more of him?"

"Not a word, miss."

"I am sorry, for I was in hopes of being able to find him, as both my father and brother are anxious to thank him for saving my life, as he did, with your aid."

"But I must see your wife."

Thurber took her bridle-rein, as she sprang from the saddle, and led her horse on toward the cottage, where Polly stood watching them, and wondering who the visitor could be.

"Polly, this is Miss Cassidy, whose life that stranger saved, the day I rowed him to the landing, you remember."

"Yes, and your good husband also aided, madam, I assure you, and I wished to call and thank him once again, and learn if he had heard more of the strange gentleman."

"No, miss, we have not heard a word of him since."

"He simply came to the house here, on foot, and after I got him some breakfast, he asked the old man to row him down to the steamboat landing, and from what Thurber tells me it was lucky for you he did, miss; but then it was Providence guided him, and the Lord directs things right."

"His coming was indeed most providential, for my life was saved thereby, and I only regret that I can find out nothing regarding who he is; but you must accept this little souvenir from me for what I owe in gratitude to your husband," and Jule held forth her purse.

"No, miss, life hain't paid for with money, and you have already more than rewarded my husband."

"It is but a slight souvenir for you, my dear madam, and I beg you to take it, if only to put it to some good use, for I have ample of this world's goods I assure you, and this is but a trifle."

"Please take it, or I will feel hurt at your refusal."

"God bless you, miss, I will take it, for Thurber and me is both getting along toward the sunset o' our lives, and what we had laid by a dishonest man got from us, and we hav'n't much left now."

"But you have been most generous, miss, and the Lord will bless you, I know."

For an hour did Jule remain and Thurber and Polly showed her about the deserted grounds and gave her a peep into the old mansion, answering her many questions about it, and its people, but not once allowing a slip of their tongues to betray that the man who had saved her life, was the rightful lord and master of the estate.

Convinced that she had been mistaken, in believing that Thurber knew who the stranger was, Jule Cassidy mounted her horse and was about to start homeward, when she asked:

"Is there not a nearer cut over to the highway, through the timberland yonder, than around by the river-gate and road?"

"Yes, miss, you can go across the meadow, following a path that leads you by the family burying-ground, if you don't mind going by such a lonely place?"

"Oh, no, I rather take a sad pleasure in visiting old graveyards, and should like to go that way."

"It will save you over a mile, miss, and the path leads through the woods, after leaving the burying-ground, and you'll reach the highway, by passing through the bars, which I will go over and let down for you."

"No, indeed, for I would not wish you to."

"I can easily dismount and let them down."

"Good-by," and she started as Thurber had directed her, the old man opening the gate for her to go into the meadow.

He watched her until she had disappeared over the hill, an eighth of a mile distant, and then turned back to go to his rustic seat and resume his pipe, in which Polly, having finished her housekeeping duties soon joined him, for she also found "consolation in the weed" as years were added to her life.

In the mean time Jule had gone on her way across the meadow, and halted upon the hillside to enjoy the superb view opening before her.

For some moments she sat as one entranced, and then rode on her way toward the little clump of trees in which was the burying-ground of the Lonsdales.

There were several pine trees there, a number of cedars, a weeping willow and a group of oaks, the largest of which had been shattered by the lightning-stroke which had slain Bruiser Bill upon the grave of Colonel Lonsdale.

The bolt that Lionel Lonsdale had witnessed, on his way to the mansion, and which had also torn the foliage, destroying the Pointing Finger so strangely limned among the leaves against the sky beyond, had left the shrubbery about the little cemetery in a ragged condition.

This Jule Cassidy noted as she rode toward it, and recognizing the cause, she said aloud:

"How strange that the lightning should strike here in this resting-place of the dead."

"It would seem like Heaven's anger visited upon some poor unfortunate in his grave."

Upon the velvet grass of the meadow her horse made no sound as he walked along, and the pine s raw upon the path muffled his hoof-falls as she turned in among the thick foliage.

Suddenly she drew rein, for she had ridden upon a strange sight.

Before her were two men, with bared arms and evil faces, digging down into a grave.

So enwrapped were they with their own work that they failed to see her until she was almost upon them.

The path was too narrow for her to turn her horse, as she tried to do, for who could they be but grave ghouls, digging open that grave for some unholy purpose?

Ere she could even tighten her rein they were upon her, each grasping a rein, and one seizing a firm hold upon her hand, while he cried out savagely:

"You has seen too much, my lady!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SOLDIER'S SECRET.

WHEN Lieutenant Douglas Drew made the resolve to discover what mysterious influences were against him, where Ruth Lonsdale had been concerned, which prevented her receiving his letter, in which he had avowed his love and asked her to become his wife, it was no idle resolve.

Upon the day of his duel with Grayson Glyndon, after the Señor Marco Del Monte had breakfasted with him, Lieutenant Drew had gone down-town to carry his resolve into execution.

He had looked in the *Herald* for an advertisement of a Secret Service Agency, and had come across the name of Frank Ferret.

So to the office of Frank Ferret he had gone and sent in his card.

He was soon ushered into the presence of the tall, majestic-looking man, with his long gray hair and beard, whom Grayson Glyndon had placed upon his track.

The detective chief arose as he entered, bowed politely and resumed his seat, which the lieutenant noticed was so situated as to cast the occupant wholly in the shadow, rendering his face hardly visible, while where the visitor sat the light was reflected full upon him, revealing every feature and expression plainly.

"How can I serve you, Lieutenant Drew, for so your card tells me is your name?" asked the detective chief, in deep tones.

"I am going back to my regiment to night, sir, which is stationed upon the frontier, and I am desirous of leaving in your hands a matter which I will pay liberally to have cleared up."

"It is my calling, sir, to throw light in dark places," said the detective, with a smile.

"I have a furlough of several months, but have decided to return without awaiting its expiration, and under certain circumstances I

consider it best to do so; but I wish you to solve certain matters for me."

"I will do my best, Lieutenant Drew."

"Of course I must make you my confidant."

"It is better that I should not work in the dark, sir."

"Well, to begin with, while on a wounded leave, something over a year ago, I was visiting friends at Long Branch, and saved the life of a young lady, who was drowning in the surf."

"Her name?"

"Ruth Lonsdale."

"Well?"

"I loved her, and had reason to believe my affection was returned; but I was called suddenly away to my command by the breaking out of an Indian war, and wrote her a long letter, telling her of my love and asking her to be my wife."

"That letter I mailed myself."

"It never reached her?"

"No, sir."

"How was it addressed?"

"Miss RUTH LONSDALE,

"Cedar Hall Mansion,

"— — — Landing,

"Hudson River,

"N. Y."

"Can you give me the date?"

Douglas Drew took out a memorandum-book and gave the date.

"Did you write again?"

"Yes, sir."

"When?"

"Two months after, when I returned from a scout in the Indian country."

"You had no reply to the first letter?"

"None, nor to the second."

"The date when you received the second letter and where?"

"They were given."

"Well, sir?"

"I returned to New York on my leave, and found that Miss Lonsdale was married."

"To whom?"

"Grayson Glyndon, a lawyer, and one who had saved the life of her father and herself, when a steamer they were on caught fire."

"Yes, and she fell in love with him?"

"She married him, at the request of her father, who was dying."

"But, wishing to see her, for something told me she had not received my letters, I went one night to call, some time since, heard her singing, as I stepped upon the piazza, and walked through the full-length window into the parlor where she was."

"Then she told me she had never received my letters, and somehow it crossed my mind that there was false play somewhere."

"I had not been there three minutes, when her husband entered, just as I had her hand, bidding her good-by, and he flew into a jealous rage, drew a revolver and would have killed me, but for a shot from the piazza, which shattered the lamp, left the room in darkness, and a voice commanded him not to move under penalty of death."

"Then I felt my arm seized, and I was dragged from the room and told to go."

"The next day, by accident, I met Mrs. Glyndon in the Park, and she could not tell me who was this strange rescuer."

"Well, we have parted, she and I, for I would not have one breath of slander fall upon her fair name, and I go to the frontier; but I leave it for you to solve the mystery as to these unreceived letters, and the one who fired that shot."

"You know all now, Detective Ferret, and I am ready to pay liberally for your services."

"You suspect foul play?"

"Can I do otherwise?"

"It would seem not, sir."

"You will undertake it for me?"

"I will accomplish it for you, sir."

"You speak with wonderful confidence."

"I will let the result prove my confidence is not unfounded."

"Well, sir, there is a fee of five hundred dollars as a bonus of good faith."

"When you need more you have my address."

"Keep your money, Lieutenant Drew, until it is needed, for I make it a rule to have my clients pay when the work is done only."

"If the mystery can be solved I believe you can do it, sir," said Douglas Drew, impressed by the strange detective.

"That is right, sir, to have confidence in one you employ."

"The patient who has no confidence in his doctor is in a bad way."

"I am glad to have met you, Lieutenant Drew, and wish you a safe return to your regiment."

"Good-by, sir," and Douglas Drew left the detective's office with the muttered words:

"Why, he dismissed me with the air of a commander-in-chief."

"But I like him, and if man can solve the mystery, he can, so I will have hope, and woe be unto him who has signed to rob me of the one woman I have ever loved."



## CHAPTER XXIV.

## VISITORS TO CEDAR HALL.

ABOUT the time that Jule Cassidy rode away from Cedar Hall, a trim little yacht, under pressure of a fine breeze, and carrying full sail, ran into the little cove where Lionel Lonsdale had landed upon his return home, and made his way up to the mansion to discover the sad changes that had come since his departure, long years before.

The yacht rounded to in the cove, and a boat was lowered, into which got two persons, one besides the oarsman.

The boat pulled toward a point where a landing could be made, and which was the spot where Lionel Lonsdale had been put ashore from the steamer which had brought him up the river.

The cove was where the yacht and boats belonging to Cedar Hall in the past had been kept, and was a secure little haven.

From there the path led up to the mansion, going near the burying-ground of the estate.

Up this path, once a carriage drive, but now weed-grown, the person who had landed from the boat took his way.

Had Jule Cassidy held her position an instant longer, gazing at the scenery before her, she would have seen the stranger appear over the hill-top; but she rode on and disappeared in the timber about the little graveyard.

At a quick step the stranger followed the path and swerved from the direct course toward the cemetery.

As he did so he heard a startled cry, and in a woman's voice, followed by the voices of men.

In an instant he sprang forward, dashed through the pines and came suddenly upon a strange scene.

He beheld Jule Cassidy in the grasp of a ruffian, who held his rough hand over her mouth to prevent her outcry, while a second man was struggling to hold her frightened steed.

"Hold her, pal, for it won't do to let her go and report that we are here digging at this grave," cried one of the men, the one who held the horse.

Hardly had he uttered the words when he was felled to the ground by a severe blow, while the horse thus released bounded away.

An instant more and the stranger was rushing upon the man who held Jule Cassidy.

But he had seen his comrade fall, and it told him of danger to himself, so he let go of the maiden, who sunk in a swoon at his feet, while he drew a revolver and opened fire upon the bold stranger rushing upon him.

His shot was well aimed, for the bullet cut through the hat of the stranger; but ere he could fire a second time a weapon flashed response, and throwing his hands above his head he fell to the ground.

"Poor girl! she has fainted."

"I must bear her to where I can get assistance, for the shock has been a severe one, and those fellows will wait."

His remark had a deep significance in it, as he glanced toward the man he had shot and knocked down.

Raising the maiden in his arms as though she had been a child, he walked rapidly toward the mansion.

In the mean time another visitor had arrived at Cedar Hall, and it was none other than Grayson Glyndon.

Old Thurber had been again interrupted in his reverie, as he sat smoking his pipe, by the rumble of wheels, and soon there appeared in sight a stylish carriage and coachman in livery.

"It is the Glyndon carriage, and I guess Miss Ruth and her husband have come up to have a look at the old place."

"If that pretty young lady, Miss Cassidy, had only waited a little longer, she might have met Miss Ruth, whom she said she did not know—no, there is only one person in the carriage, and that is Mr. Glyndon."

"I'll hurry down and open the gate."

The vehicle had halted at the gate before old Thurber got there, and Grayson Glyndon had sprung out.

"Well, old gentleman, how are you and your wife?"

"I thought I'd run up and see you and have a look at the old place," he said, in a pleasant way, as he held out his left hand, for his right one was worn in a scarf, from the effects of his wound at the hands of Douglas Drew.

"Well, I thank you, Mr. Glyndon, both me and the old lady; but have you met with an accident, sir?" and Thurber glanced at the arm in the scarf, as the two walked on toward the mansion, the carriage having already driven on, as Glyndon had told the coachman to do.

"Yes, it was an accident that has made me one-armed for a few weeks, I guess; but it is getting all right."

"Has the agent been up of late, Thurber?"

"Yes, sir, he was up yesterday."

"Well, what did he have to say?"

"He said he would send a purchaser up to see the place, sir, for he thought he knew one who would buy it," said Thurber sadly.

"The deuce he did!"

"Yes, sir."

"He said he would send a purchaser up to see the place, sir, for he thought he knew one who would buy it," said Thurber sadly.

"Perhaps he spoke to Miss Ruth, sir," said Thurber innocently, but it was a dig at Glyndon all the same, and his face flushed.

"No, or she would have told me."

"But have you seen any strangers prowling about of late?"

"No, sir."

"These are dangerous times, Thurber, and several country seats upon the river have been robbed of late, so you must keep a bright lookout."

"I do, sir."

"Then all is safe and quiet?"

"Well, sir, the storm some time ago was a severe one, and the large tree over the colonel's grave was struck by lightning."

"No!" cried Grayson Glyndon.

"Yes, sir."

"That is strange; but it did no other damage I hope?"

"No, sir."

"Did you see it?"

"No, sir, it was struck at night; but I saw it early the next morning."

"Was the grave hurt any?"

"Only plowed up a little, sir, and covered with splinters, but I smoothed it over again and it is the same as before, only the trees were cut up some considerable."

"That is too bad; but I am glad it was no worse, for the mansion might have been struck, or your cottage; but no one else has been here?"

"No, sir—and, yes, sir, for a young lady just left."

"A young lady, Thurber?"

"Yes, sir, Miss Cassidy, a daughter of Judge Cassidy the gentleman who lately purchased the Stone Vale some miles below on the river, sir."

"And what could have brought her here?"

"Well, sir, a gentleman came here some time ago and asked me to row him down to the landing, and I did so."

"On our way Miss Cassidy's horse plunged over the Point of Rocks, he having run away with her, and the gentleman sprang into the water and saved her; but the horse sunk, and was lost."

"He did not give her his name, and she came here to try and find out, as her father was anxious to know, that he might thank him, and she wished to reward me, too, and did so."

"She had just started home on horseback when you came in sight, and she went through the woods, to the other highway—Hark! listen to those shots, sir!"

"And they come from the burying-ground," cried Grayson Glyndon, and, as he uttered the words, Jule Cassidy's riderless horse dashed into view, coming across the meadow at full speed and neighing wildly, as though in uncontrollable fright.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## THE DETECTIVE CHIEF.

WHEN Grayson Glyndon saw the riderless horse dash into view, he ran at once toward the gate leading into the meadow, followed by Thurber, who developed considerable speed for one of his years.

As they reached the gate, where the horse stood snorting and nervous, they saw appear in sight a tall man, and in his arms he held a burden.

"He is carrying the maiden; ho, Vinton, drive the carriage here quickly!" called out Grayson Glyndon to his coachman, who was a hundred yards away.

While Thurber caught the frightened horse, Glyndon threw open the gate, and, springing into the carriage, which just then drew up, he called out:

"Drive to meet that man, Vinton, with all speed, and relieve him of his burden."

The carriage whirled away, and soon drew up in front of the one who had been carrying the maiden, but had just released her, as she had returned to consciousness.

"Springing out of the vehicle, Grayson Glyndon called out with surprise:

"Mr. Ferret, the detective chief!"

"You here at Cedar Hall?"

"Yes, Mr. Glyndon, I fortunately came here, in the discharge of duties devolving upon me, and was in time to save this young lady from violent hands," was the response in the deep tones of the gray-haired and bearded chief of Secret Service men.

"And I have to offer you my deepest gratitude, sir, for I fear those men meant to kill me, rather than have me tell—"

"Sh! Young lady, do not say to any one what you discovered, I beg of you."

"You were simply attacked by footpads, that is all, who wanted your purse and jewelry, and I happening to come to Cedar Hall, was fortunate enough to be near."

"That is all, and I'll see that you are not called upon to give any testimony in the matter."

There was something in the manner of the low-spoken words that told Jule Cassidy there was a hidden meaning in them, and Grayson Glyndon also felt the same.

The coachman, a couple of rods away managing his restive horses, had heard them.

"You mean, then, that I am simply to tell of

my being attacked by footpads, sir, and was rescued by you?"

"Yes, that is all, and leave the rest to me, and, as Mr. Glyndon simply knows what he has heard, he will only report that and no more."

Grayson Glyndon seemed nettled by the words and look of the detective, but he said nothing, while Jule said earnestly:

"You were most brave, sir, to run upon these two desperate men, and—"

"It is my calling, young lady, for I am an officer of the law."

"Your name, sir, please, for I did not catch it when this gentleman spoke it?"

"Frank Ferret, chief of a band of detectives in the city, Miss Cassidy."

"Ah! you know me?" said Jule, with surprise.

"Yes, I have seen you before; but, as you appear to be unknown to Mr. Glyndon, permit me to present him to you as the present master of Cedar Hall."

"Mr. Glyndon, this lady is Miss Cassidy, the daughter of Judge Cassidy of Stone Vale."

"I am happy to meet Miss Cassidy, and regret that Cedar Hall is closed, so that I cannot offer her its hospitality."

"But the cottage of its keeper is open, and I will—"

"Thank you, sir, I came hither to see Thurber and reward him for a service rendered me by him and one other, and I was returning home through the woods to the highway when I was set upon by those—those—"

"Footpads," suggested the detective.

"Yes, those footpads; but here comes Thurber with my horse, so I will mount and go home—only, not through the woods," and Jule shrugged her pretty shoulders.

As Thurber led the horse up, the detective chief raised her to her saddle and raised his hat, but took her hand as she extended it in farewell as she rode away, bowing simply to Grayson Glyndon.

"Let your coachman return to the mansion, please, Mr. Glyndon, and have Thurber go after the nearest coroner, and bring him here with what men he can get as a jury, for there are bodies over yonder for them to sit on."

Grayson Glyndon gave the orders for the coachman and for Thurber, the latter in his spring wagon, to both drive after the coroner and the jury, and then he followed the detective as requested to the scene of the tragedy.

"Mr. Glyndon," said Chief Ferret, as they walked along.

"Well, sir?"

"Do you know why I came here?"

"No, sir, nor can I guess."

"I learned through my Secret Service spies that there was to be an attempt made by two men to rob the grave of Colonel Lonsdale."

"The grave of my father-in-law?" asked Grayson Glyndon, in surprise.

"Yes, sir, and I knew that the attempt was to be made in the daylight, as it seems there is some dread of this place by night."

"You amaze me."

"I came here to catch these grave ghouls; but I did not expect them to be in double deviltry, for they meant to kill Miss Cassidy, who surprised them in their work."

"But why should they wish to rob Colonel Lonsdale's grave, sir?"

"Cannot you tell me, for I confess that is what I do not know?"

"No, sir, I cannot imagine a reason, as he certainly was buried with nothing valuable about him, other than the silver mounting of his coffin."

"There was a deeper motive than this, sir."

"Have you any clew?"

"None, but I judge so, when two such well-known crooks, who aim high, come by day to open his grave."

"I wish you could solve the mystery for me, then, for I cannot."

"It is hardly worth the while, now, as the offense will doubtless not be repeated, for these men kept their secret to themselves, certainly, and no one else can have reason to come."

"But I must make my report to you, sir, in regard to the matter you placed in my hands."

"Well, sir?"

"Your soldier, whom you wished shadowed, put up at the New York Hotel, where he had a handsome suite of rooms, for he is rich."

"He attended the opera one night with some friends. You, your wife and some friends occupied an opposite box, and you took the opportunity to meet Lieutenant Drew in the lobby, and a duel the next morning followed the conversation you held with him."

"You meant to kill him, but he was more merciful and spared your life, simply wounding your sword-arm to prevent you from being dangerous."

"He returned that night to his regiment on the frontier, and you gave out that you had fractured your arm, and so the duel is not known to the public."

"You seem thoroughly well informed, sir," said Grayson Glyndon with a sneer.

"That is what you expected of me, sir, when you asked my aid."



"Have you posted yourself as well upon the matter of that mysterious shot?"

"Yes, sir."

"And your explanation of that, sir?"

"A man was in the parlor when your wife's entrance caused him to seek a hiding-place."

"He ran behind the heavy Persian portieres hanging in front of the bay window and there remained during the scene that followed."

"Your coming in caused him to dread discovery, and, to escape, he fired the shot at the lamp and in the darkness and excitement that followed made good his retreat."

"This is certainly a plausible solution, Mr. Ferret."

"His motive then was burglary?"

"What other motive could a man have for going there to your house at night, Mr. Glyndon?"

"True; but may I ask how you arrived at this solution of the mystery?"

"I can no more tell you than I can how I discovered the movements of Lieutenant Drew and found out that it is useless to place a detective to shadow your wife, for there is no need of it."

"Hah! you discovered this fact too?"

"I was so instructed by you, sir."

"And you will not tell me how?"

"Oh, no, for that is one of the secrets of my profession."

"Well, sir, name your price?"

"You may mail me a check to my office at your convenience, sir, for three hundred dollars."

"I will send it on my return to the city; but here we are at the graveyard," and the two entered the clump of trees surrounding the little cemetery.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE UNKNOWN.

MISTRESS BETTY, as the days went by, and no trouble came to her, got over her alarm, and the dread of seeing officers of the law enter her rookery died away.

If the man whom her son had attempted to murder and rob, in what was known as the "Execution Chamber," and whom Stiletto, the Italian, had assassinated, though he lost his own life at the time, had been a detective, as Nick had suggested that he was, the fact that no trouble followed, no questions were asked regarding his mysterious disappearance, and nothing appeared in the papers, caused him to be set down as acting upon his own responsibility and having no comrades in his secret.

So matters went on as before, at Mistress Betty Binnacle's, in the even tenor of its way, which was certainly a very evil way.

The fact was that Miss Betty herded the worst gang of burglars in the city, and they were men who became assassins, or murderers, as the case might be.

She owned the several old rookeries about the one which was known as the Seaman's Paradise, and she had put her son, and several mechanics of skill and ingenuity among the band, into making passageways to secret underground chambers in the adjoining houses.

It was supposed that Mistress Betty knew just who the chief of the Water Wolves was, for none of his men did, though no one was sure that she did.

Some asserted that the chief was Mistress Betty's husband, for no one ever remembered to have seen that personage, or to know whether he was dead or alive, had died a natural death, if dead, or at the end of the rope, or, if living, dwelt within prison bars or had left the country for its welfare as well as his own.

Others asserted that the mysterious masked chief of the Water Wolves was an elder son of Miss Betty's, and yet no one knew for certain who he was, unless it was the landlady of the Seaman's Paradise and her son Nick.

Certain it was, however, that this unknown chief commanded his outlaw band with wonderful skill and nerve.

He held them together under iron rule, and he had his plans laid out for each one to strictly follow.

He sent his men on secret burglaries, which most generally turned out just as he said, and he took good care to cover up the tracks of his picked tools in all that they did.

The sloop Owl, which was the property of the Water Wolves, had the appearance of being a dingy trader, and yet no gentleman's yacht could outsail her.

Often she was sent off on a short cruise, and some river or seaside country seat was sure to be the sufferer.

Now and then she would run in on a dark, rainy night, alongside of a dock where a valuable cargo had been landed, the watchman would be caught, and the Owl would set sail with her booty.

About the city the Water Wolves were constantly busy, their well-planned burglaries causing them to defy the police nine in ten times.

And all these burglaries and wicked, daring deeds the Unknown Chief planned and selected the men to carry out.

There never had been a member of the band

of Water Wolves, when caught, who had proven traitor to his pals.

He had gone to prison to suffer, hoping for his comrades to release him in some way, or with the determination to escape, and generally he did so.

Several had gone to the gallows but their lips had remained sealed until the rope ended their lives.

They were some half a hundred in number, and among them were safe-cracksmen, burglars, pickpockets, traveling sharpers and others of like ilk in the "profession" of thievery.

They were all ready to purchase personal safety by the death of one who opposed them, and a more fearless, reckless, dangerous lot could not be found banded together.

Each week every man drew his salary, a fair allowance being made, and all the profits of their vile deeds were turned into a common treasury, and they were given a percentage, after expenses were paid, of all taken in each month in the way of booty. One-third went to "expenses," one-third to the chief, and the remainder to the men, Mistress Betty drawing her share of percentage also.

There were several "female crooks" belonging to the band also, who were generally most successful in their line of roguery, and they were the wives of some of the men, and in some cases the daughters, reared by their fathers to a life of evil.

The "laws" that governed the band were "iron-clad," so to speak, for the punishments for disobedience of orders, drunkenness and treachery were most severe, death being the penalty of the latter crime.

Such was the band of Water Wolves, under their unknown chief, who had their secret haunt in the underground chambers of the Seaman's Paradise.

There were frequenters of this place, honest tars and workmen, too poor to eat or sleep elsewhere, who little dreamed that they were in the very hotbed of iniquity; but these were few, fortunately, Mistress Betty looking for her greatest revenue from her "pals" who lodged and ate in the old rookery of sin.

Seated in his luxuriously-furnished rooms, where the reader has before seen him, and with the same beautiful but haughty-faced woman near him, is the man who was unknown to those he ruled.

A decanter of rare old wine stood on a table at his elbow, a fragrant cigar was between his lips, and he was busy conning over some plans of houses which he held in his hand.

"It is time for the meeting of the Water Wolves, King," said the woman, laying down the book she was reading and glancing at a jeweled watch.

"Ah! so it is, and I must go down to the depths," he said, rising.

"Anything important to-night, King, to be transacted?" she asked, languidly.

"Well, yes, there are some good burglaries I have in view, and the plans are here."

"I hope they will pan out well, for I need money just now, more than ever."

"And, by the way, Queen, there is an important matter that I wish to ask your aid in; but I have not time now, as the Wolves are assembled, and there is to be an execution to-night."

"An execution?" she asked, with surprise.

"Yes, for we have a traitor in our camp; but I will return in half an hour and tell you about it."

"Ah, King, let me go with you to-night to that secret tribunal."

He turned, hesitated, and said:

"Well, put on your domino and a mask and come, but it must not be known that you are a woman."

A few moments after the two entered the closet, passed through the secret door and were descending to the dungeon of the Water Wolves.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE VERDICT.

WHEN the detective chief and Grayson Glyndon entered the copse of woods wherein was hidden away the little burying-ground of the Lonsdales, the former led the way directly to the spot where the two men had captured Jule Cassidy, and which was but a few yards from the grave of the former master of Cedar Hall.

There, with a bullet in his brain, lay one of the Grave Ghouls, but the other was not visible anywhere.

"You said there were two," remarked Grayson Glyndon.

"And so there were, but the fellow I struck with my revolver-barrel had a harder head, it seems, than I supposed, and he has gone, that is certain."

"You merely stunned him?"

"So it seems, for he is not here; but he fell like one who had received his death-wound."

"You speak as though you had seen men die by violence often before."

"I have, Mr. Glyndon," was the quiet response of the old detective.

"Well, this one is dead?"

"Oh, yes, for I shot him through the head, and he put this bullet-hole in my hat," and the detective pointed to where the bullet of the Grave Ghoul had torn through his hat.

"It is useless to attempt to find him, I suppose?"

"Yes, at this time; but I am sorry he escaped."

"So am I; but you were right, for they were opening the grave," and Grayson Glyndon pointed to the grave, out of which a quantity of earth had been thrown, and in which were a shovel and spade left by the two men.

"I will first see what this gentleman has about him, that may tell us who he is, and then I will fill up the grave, that the coroner and his jury may not suspect they were here to rob it."

"I guess it would be better so, Chief Ferret," answered Glyndon.

The detective then bent over the dead ruffian, while Grayson Glyndon watched him closely.

He first took off a small silver pin, worn under the flap of his coat, and which was a skull and cross-bones.

In his pocket were some skeleton keys, some little money, and a knife was worn in his side vest-pocket, while his hand still grasped his revolver.

The chief placed all back as he found them, and then turned to the grave.

In a short while he had filled in the loose earth and smoothed it over again, as before.

He then concealed the spade and shovel beneath some leaves some distance away, and had just returned when the rumble of wheels told of the approach of the carriage and spring-wagon with the coroner and his jury.

They soon arrived, and the coroner recognizing Grayson Glyndon, was presented to the detective chief whom he did not know.

In a few words Chief Ferret told his story, how he was engaged in a little Secret Service work, along the river-bank, and had just landed from his yacht, which lay in the cove, to go up to Cedar Hall, where, in passing the burying-ground he heard a cry in a woman's voice, and he had quickly gone to the rescue.

"The fellows had seized the young lady, to rob her, evidently expecting to get a snug sum, and her jewelry, when I appeared."

"I dealt one a blow with my revolver-barrel, which I supposed had cracked his skull, and the other firing upon me, letting the young lady fall to the ground as he did so, for she had fainted, I returned the shot, and you see the result."

"The other scamp had too hard a head to crack, but I guess he will carry my mark to his grave, for I laid his forehead open."

"Such, Mr. Coroner, and gentlemen of the jury, is the story I have to tell, and the body of the man I killed lies there, while I await your verdict," said the chief, and his manner was unmoved.

The coroner, as well as the jury, were deeply impressed by the long gray hair and beard of the man, his imposing bearing and quiet mien, and, as he was a detective chief in the city also, they were quite awed by his presence and quickly rendered a verdict—to wit:

"That the deceased had come to his death through a bullet-wound in the head, the said shot having been fired by Detective Frank Ferret of New York City, while in the discharge of his duty, and that the said slayer was accordingly held guiltless of wrong-doing, and the jury regretted that the dead man's pal had not also fallen by the same hands."

The body was then taken to the nearest village cemetery for burial, and thanking the coroner and the jury, the detective chief walked away with Grayson Glyndon.

As they reached the path, where the detective was to turn off to return to his yacht in the cove, and Grayson Glyndon was to go on his way to the mansion, where his carriage awaited him, the latter said:

"You are a strange man, Chief Ferret, and I hope we will become better acquainted."

"If you find that your theory is right, that those men had some good reason for robbing the grave of my father-in-law, pray communicate with me, for I confess to a curiosity upon the subject."

"I will, Mr. Glyndon, and would it not be as well not even to speak to your wife upon the subject, for it will pain her to learn that not even in death is her father allowed to rest in peace?"

"Yes, I will not speak to any one upon the subject."

"Good-afternoon," and the young man raised his hat and walked away.

But he watched from a clump of trees until he saw the detective's yacht stand out of the cove, and then he walked on, while he said, half aloud:

"That is a strange man, and I must learn more of him; but how in Heaven's name did he ever learn of the duel?"

After a short conversation with old Thurlberg, Grayson Glyndon drove back to the city, with more soul for thought than he had expected to find when he came out to Cedar Hall, a place he seemed never to have liked, for since the death of Colonel Lonsdale he had never passed a day in the old home.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## THE GATHERING OF THE WOLVES.

WITH the superstitious dread that is innate in the minds of most wicked people, the Water Wolves, assembled in the council-chamber known as The Tomb, were seated in silent awe, awaiting the entrance of their unknown chief.

A short while before the hour for their regular weekly gathering, a man had entered the Seaman's Paradise with his head bound up as though suffering with a sick headache.

Mistress Betty had recognized him at a glance, and called out:

"Why, Captain Kit, what on earth ails you?"

"I've got bad pains in my head, Mistress Binnacle—hain't been myself for two days," was the response.

"That's too bad."

"So it is."

"Caught cold, maybe?" suggested the sympathetic woman, when her interests were concerned, for Captain Kit was a good patron.

"Well, no, I got into a row with the cops, and one of them gave me a slash across my face with a club."

"You don't tell me?"

"Yes, and it made my head rattle like a bean-box, I kin tell yer, Mistress Binnacle."

"He just opened the flesh to the bone, and it will leave me marked for life."

"Now, that is too bad, especially for a man in your profession."

"But have you just come from a cruise in the Owl?"

"No, the Owl has been roosting the past few days."

"And you have come to the council?"

"Yes."

"And where's Buster?"

"I haven't seen him for several days."

"Nor I."

"He left the sloop several days ago, and I suppose the chief has sent him off on some little expedition."

"Maybe so; but did you see about Ferret, the detective chief, rescuing a young lady from two highwaymen, and killing one?"

"No."

"Well, it's in the papers; but I guess it wasn't any of our boys."

"I guess not; but who is Ferret, the detective?"

"He's a new Secret Service man, I hear."

"They is getting too many Secret Service men about, Mistress Binnacle."

"Yes, for our good, they are; but won't you have su'thin'?"

"I was just going to say I'd smile at you, Mistress Binnacle, and then I'll have to go on to The Tomb, for the boys will soon be gathering there, I guess."

"Yes, some have gone in now; but the chief never appears until nine o'clock, you know, and you've got half an hour yet."

So Mistress Betty got out a bottle of her own drinking, and had a couple of glasses with Captain Kit, for, as he was wont to give her an airing on the sloop down the bay of a Sunday afternoon, or up the Sound, she was always anxious to please him.

Then, the captain was always a good customer.

He was captain of the sloop Owl, which belonged to the Water Wolves, and had his quarters on board, pretending to be a harbor trading boat, and many was the daring adventure he had been in about New York with his fleet little craft, acting under orders from the unknown chief.

Having been admitted through the secret way by Mistress Betty, Captain Kit found the band sitting in silence awaiting the coming of the unknown chief.

Rats, who was usher, or, more properly speaking, in that gloomy place, undertaker, escorted him in silence to his seat.

There was a larger number present than usual, fully two-score men occupying the seats fronting the sable curtains and position of honor.

The lamps shed forth a dim light, and the silence of the place was oppressive in the extreme.

The men looked up at the coming in of Captain Kit, but did not speak, for they seemed under a spell in that dismal place.

Captain Kit sat down in the same silent way, and all awaited the coming of their chief.

At last the sable curtains were seen to move, and the tall form of the masked unknown appeared before them.

Instantly all arose and bowed, then resumed their seats.

As they did so, and turned their gaze again upon their chief, they beheld that he was not alone.

A small person was with him, clad in a long, dark gown, like a priest, and wearing a mask and slouch hat that wholly covered the face.

The chief motioned the one with him to stand in front of the sable curtains, while he took his accustomed seat before the desk.

The Water Wolves gazed with deeper awe upon their chief, for who was that black-robed man he had brought with him, they wondered.

Never before had the chief brought any one with him, and what did the coming of a stranger portend?

As though to add to their suspense the chief seemed to delay in speaking longer than usual, and when he did speak his words caused his hearers to start visibly, for he said in a voice that was deep and full of meaning:

"Water Wolves, there is a traitor in our band!"

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## OUTLAW JUSTICE.

THE band of "Professional Tieves" had sprung from a nucleus of several men, who had banded together for social intercourse and also for protection.

Thus it had gone on increasing, until Mistress Betty had suggested a head to the league, and, their having carried out successfully several plans furnished them by the landlady, which brought money into their purse, they were willing to be led by her.

So it was that she planned, arranged and managed the affairs of the Secret League, until she introduced them one night into their underground haunt, and the next night to their leader.

He was masked then, as ever after, and not one of them, as I have before said, knew who was the man who held them in his power, and yet allowed no one to know who or what he was.

So successfully had he governed them, however, that they did not have any cause of complaint, and when he read the laws for them to be ruled by, they subscribed to them without a dissenting voice, cruel and appalling as they were.

When therefore they saw their unknown chief appear, and with him one whom they saw was also masked, and heard the startling words that there was a traitor in their midst, the Water Wolves started with amazement.

Each man glanced at his neighbors with fear, and the one who felt innocent suspected every other one present.

But not a word did they utter, as they sat awaiting for their chief to say more.

"So there is a traitor in our midst," came the stern words once more.

Still the silence remained unbroken among the men.

The eyes, peering through the mask, seemed to be reading every face, and, guiltless as they were, the men grew nervous and uncomfortable.

"Let the traitor rise!"

Not a man moved.

"The one who has proven false to his oath, and to his confederates here assembled, is here before me—so let him come forward."

The silence that followed was appalling.

But no one moved.

"Let me read you a scrap from a paper published yesterday morning," and the unknown chief read aloud in his deep, deliberate voice, as follows:

## "A DASTARD DEED.

"A most dastardly act was committed two days ago, in the woods of the Cedar Hall estate, the home of the late Colonel Lonsdale, by two highwaymen, who seized the bride-rein of a young lady, the daughter of a wealthy and prominent gentleman dwelling upon his country seat on the Hudson, and attempted to rob her of her purse and jewelry."

"The young lady, whose name we suppress, as she wishes to escape notoriety, was riding alone on horseback, and so alarmed was she, when her horse was seized and herself dragged from her saddle that she fainted away, just as rescue came in the person of Mr. Frank Ferret, chief of a Secret Service League lately organized in this city."

"Chief Ferret was on the track of some law-breakers, and fortunately was near, and hearing the young lady's cry for help rushed upon the scene."

"He felled one of the robbers to the ground with his pistol, and fired upon the other, returned the shot, killing the man who thought his life."

"He then carried the young lady toward Cedar Hall, to find aid, but she revived just as Grayson Glyndon drove up in his carriage, and was able to mount her horse and ride home alone."

"A coroner and jury were sent for by the detective, but upon returning to the scene of the tragedy, the man who had been knocked down was gone, and his companion alone remained, the bullet of the brave chief having passed through his head."

"Justifiable homicide was the verdict, with a regret that the other scamp had escaped."

After having read thus far the unknown chief stopped, and waiting for a minute, as though for some one to speak, he said:

"Now, men, these two men belonged to the Water Wolves' League, and when I tell you that they did not go there as highwaymen, but to rob the grave of Colonel Lonsdale, you may know that they were traitors to us as a body."

"I asked for men to go the other night, and no one moved in response, and I said I would have to go myself."

"It was urged that the grave was fatal to those who stuck spade into it, for one had been killed by lightning while digging into its depths."

"It does indeed seem a fatal grave, for another died by it at the hands of Ferret, the detective, for they meant to kill that young lady,

who rode upon them and surprised them at their work."

"They went there by day, fearing to go by night, and intending to rob the grave of what it held, and hold it wholly for themselves."

"This I know, so who were the men?"

Again not a man spoke.

Not a man moved.

"Where is he whom we know as Buster?"

No reply.

"Let Buster come forward."

No one moved, and Rats said:

"He is not here, chief."

"No, hardly, after a coroner has sat on him, for he was the one whom Ferret killed."

A murmur of amaze ran through the crowd at this.

Then the unknown chief resumed:

"Let the man who was with Buster come forward."

Again that awful silence, and again no one obeyed.

"Captain Kit, advance!"

"Oh, God!"

The words broke involuntarily from the lips of Captain Kit.

"Come forward, master of the sloop Owl!"

The voice rung out stern and threatening now, and the guilty man arose and advanced toward his chief, and also his judge in that outlaw court.

"You, sir, are the man, who, with your mate, known as Buster, went to rob the Lonsdale grave."

"Remove that handkerchief, that your comrades may see the blow dealt you by Ferret, the detective."

The man seemed cowed, and incapable of disobedience, and the ugly gash across his forehead, seamed with court-plaster, told the story, and the men spoke an instant among themselves in a low tone as they saw it.

"How did you get that wound, sir?"

"From Ferret, the detective, chief," was the low response.

"Where?"

"At the Lonsdale grave."

"Why were you there?"

"To rob it."

"You know our laws?"

"Alas! but too well."

"And have broken them?"

"I plead guilty, chief."

"Water Wolves, arise!"

Every man arose.

"You have heard what this man, your brother, trusted above all others except your chief, has said?"

"We have!"

The words came in one mighty chorus from forty lips.

"What shall be his fate?"

"Death!"

In the same deep voices was the doom of the traitor uttered.

Then followed from the unknown chief:

"Traitor you have been, and death is the doom of treachery."

"You must die!"

## CHAPTER XXX.

## THE FATE OF THE TRAITOR.

THERE was no tremor in the voice that spoke the fateful words to the doomed man.

Whoever he was, he kept his voice in control, and he was not one to falter in carrying out the cruel laws of the outlaw Order when it fell upon him to do so.

Captain Kit groaned in his anguish.

It was the only sound that broke the stillness of that awful room, for, far removed from the street, not even the rumble of wheels upon the stones could be heard there.

"You know your doom?" coldly asked the chief.

"Yes," came in a low tone.

"You are aware just how you are to expiate your treason?"

"Yes."

"And yet you sought to break faith with us?"

"Our lives are full of peril, and only by the most appalling punishments for crimes against our Order can we protect ourselves."

"Hence we make our own laws, and before swearing a man in he knows all that he must face."

"You, knowing the alternative, sought to enrich yourself and your partner."

"He is dead, and well for you had it been that you also had fallen at the hands of Ferret, the detective."

"But you yielded to the hope of gain, and meant to leave the league with the fruits of what you supposed you would thus secretly gain."

"Having done so, you must suffer your fate, which is to take this powder in a glass of wine."

"It will bring unconsciousness to you, and while thus sleeping you will be placed in this iron coffin and fastened up."

"The coffin will be lowered into the tomb beneath your feet, and the stone flagging placed over it."

"There you will be left to recover consciousness, realize your condition, and die an awful death."



"The horrors of that death you alone can feel, but we shudder for you as we bring before our thoughts what they must be.

"When twenty-four hours have passed, your tomb will be opened, your body will be taken from the grave, carried in a barrel on board the sloop, which will sail out to sea with you, and, loaded with chains, you will be sunk into the depths of the ocean.

"Knowing this, you sinned, you broke your oath of allegiance, and you must suffer the fearful consequences, leaving the iron coffin, the tomb and the same fate for the next one who dares prove treacherous to the Water Wolves."

Every word was distinctly heard by the doomed man, and by every one present.

It was the first execution of the Water Wolves, though minor punishments, which their laws called for for slight offenses, had been administered.

Who the executioner of the punishments was, no one knew, other than the chief.

He would select his man, and the latter, wholly disguised, masked face and form, would administer the outlaws' law according to his orders, and hence no hard feeling could be raised against any one for doing his duty in carrying out the Water Wolves' ideas of justice.

When brought face to face with their most fearful punishment; when seeing one of their number whom they had known and liked, about to suffer the penalty for his crime of treachery, they realized how horrible indeed was the oath they had taken.

As for Kit, he stood like a statue.

No groan or cry for mercy came from him.

He either showed wonderful nerve and self-control, or he had become numb by his awful position into being incapable of movement or utterance.

Suddenly the form behind the unknown chief stepped forward, and bending over said a few words in a tone hardly audible, to the man in whom lay so much power over that band of his fellow-creatures.

He listened, but made no audible reply, and the form stepped back and disappeared behind the folds of the black curtain.

Then the unknown chief said:

"I have been asked to show mercy to this man, as this is our first execution, and his offense has not been to betray us, but to enrich himself."

At this Kit started and raised his head.

The word mercy had aroused him from his statue-like attitude, and his face was bent eagerly up to the chief.

"But, Water Wolves, when mercy is shown once, it makes men reckless of consequences, and our lives hang by too slender a thread to allow any mistake to be made.

"The words mercy and merciful do not occur in our by-laws, and I shall not now place them there.

"There is no mercy for you, sir—you must suffer your doom!"

As the chief spoke, the unfortunate man raised his arms appealingly toward him, but no word came from his lips, and then he fell suddenly forward in his tracks.

A murmur ran through the crowd at this, but the chief sat unmoved.

"He has fainted. Let him be placed in the coffin while in a swoon."

Two men, masked and wearing dominoes glided from the rear of the chamber, raised him up, placed him in the iron coffin in front of the platform, and one of them said:

"I think he is dead, chief."

"It is the better for him if it is so.

"Do your duty."

The men raised the two heavy stone slabs that covered an open grave, and the coffin was lowered into it.

Then the two slabs were replaced, and the two executioners retreated as before, disappearing in a door at the rear of the chamber, no one, other than the chief, having recognized them.

"Brick Benson, I appoint you to the command of the sloop, and as both Bruiser Bill and Buster are dead, you must select two good seamen from the band for a crew.

"To-morrow night, at this time, open this grave and carry the traitor's body out to sea and sink it.

"Do you understand?"

"Yes, chief," responded the man addressed, who had arisen when he heard his name called.

"This council of the Water Wolves is adjourned."

And with this the unknown chief disappeared through the sable curtains behind him.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

## A STRANGE PLOT.

WHEN the unknown chief of the Water Wolves returned to his rooms, by way of the ladder up the secret chimney, he found the woman pacing to and fro, her face livid with the scene she had witnessed in the dungeon below ground.

"Oh, that I had never gone!" she cried, as the man entered from the closet and throwing aside his disguise took his accustomed easy-

She had laid off her mask and domino, and as she spoke turned toward him.

"You seem strangely excited, Queen, so be calm."

"I cannot be calm after what I witnessed."

"You asked to go with me."

"True, but not one thought had I that it would be so horrible."

"Why, I shall not dare to close my eyes for fear of seeing that poor wretch writhing in his coffin."

"Nonsense! he fell dead when I refused to show him the mercy you asked, and so your dread and your sympathy are wasted."

"He fell dead?"

"Yes, Queen, he had hope at my first words, and the revulsion at the last drove the blood to his brain and killed him."

"Thank God! he will not then awaken to his awful doom?"

"No."

"I thought I should die as I stood there and heard your awful words, King."

"We have been through strange scenes together, and you know that I have seen men die, far from here; but that was too fearful to think of, and the woman shuddered."

"Take a glass of wine, Queen, to control your nerves, for I have something important to communicate."

"Well," she said, as she dashed off a glass of wine he poured out for her, and then sat down near him.

"Matters are not going as I could wish, Queen."

"How do you mean?"

"In a pecuniary way."

"Why is it so?"

"Well, I cannot now explain; but I have met with losses, and money I have expended has not come in."

"Do not the Wolves bring you in a good income?"

"Oh, yes, a thousand a week, perhaps, as an average, is my share; but it is not enough, and I have a plan to get hold of an immense fortune at a blow."

"How large?"

"Call it half a dozen millions."

"That is a sum worth a struggle for."

"It stands just this way, and you can help me in it, for your beauty, talent, exquisite form, and powers of fascination are wonderful, Queen."

"Thank you; we are strangely alike, are we not?"

"There is an old man who has this fortune, and it is said that he has heart disease."

"He has two children, a son, a wild profligate fellow, but handsome, accomplished and very attractive in his manners, and a daughter who is a beautiful girl."

"The old man made a will, before his son became wild and a spendthrift, in which he left him his whole fortune, and for him to share with his sister as he pleased."

"Now the father has threatened to change this will, but has not yet done so, though he may, if he takes a sudden humor some day."

"My idea is for you to move away from here, get a home of your own up town, which I will furnish elegantly for you, and hire some old woman to play aunt for the sake of respectability."

"I will give you servants, horses and carriages, let it get circulated about that you are a rich Mexican maiden, whose mother was an American lady and married a wealthy ranchero of Mexico, and that you have come with your aunt to dwell in New York."

"I'll see that you meet this young man of whom I speak, and you must fascinate him, inveigle him into your net, and marry him."

"Marry him, King?" asked the woman, in a surprised tone.

"Why, yes; for, once you get him in your power, the father will suddenly die, I can assure you, and if you don't care to have your husband live, why, it is just as easy to get rid of him, you know," was the cool response of the designing villain.

"You plot deeply, boldly and cruelly, King."

"Yes, for I plot for bright stakes, and I tell you, Queen, we shall win."

"We should, after so much of sinful plotting."

"Well, what do you say, Queen?"

"You know that I always yield to your wishes, King."

"Very well, I will hunt you up a house to-morrow and find you an aunt."

"Then you can furnish your place, engage your servants and buy your horses and carriages to suit you."

"And my name?"

"Well, you will be *Señorita Queena Estevan*."

"That is a good name; and my aunt?" and the woman smiled.

"Never mind about her now, for she is to be but a figurehead, and I'll send to Philadelphia and get some old woman whom no one here knows, but one who will play her part satisfactorily for a stated sum, while I will visit you as your aunt."

"Oh, the scheme will work all right, and we'll get a fortune by it at one stroke."

"But who is this young man that I am to marry?" asked the young woman, with some show of interest.

"His name is Kent Cassidy," was the response of the unknown chief of the Water Wolves.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## WAS IT FATE?

"WHO is she?"

A dozen asked the question, and the questioners found no response.

No one knew who she was.

Those who questioned stood in the windows of a handsome structure on a fashionable avenue in New York City.

It was a club-house, and very tony, though a trifle fast, perhaps.

The one of whom the question was asked, without information being given, was a young and beautiful woman.

She had just passed by the club-house, and her superb form, elegantly dressed, queenly manner and dark, exquisitely lovely face had riveted every eye upon her.

"A stranger in the city, surely."

"A foreigner."

"A Cuban."

"Or a Mexican."

"Doubtless a New Orleans Creole."

"Pretty is not the word to express her style."

"No, she is exquisitely lovely."

"Quite as handsome as the beautiful Mrs. Glyndon."

"Wholly different, though, in style."

"How stately she walks."

"What eyes."

Such was the club gossip as the object of it swept along.

She had turned her brilliant eyes upon the windows, seemed to meet every eye, and then had passed on, while the gossiping young bloods discussed her as though she was up for sale and they meant to buy.

"You missed a lovely sight, Cassidy," cried a voice, as just then a young man entered the room, arrayed in a riding-suit.

"Do you mean that beautiful creature that just passed up the street?" asked Kent Cassidy.

"Yes, did you see her?"

"I did, and can never forget her."

"Who is she?"

"No one knows."

"I will find out."

"How?"

"I don't know how, but I will."

"Why, I fairly started when I met her eyes," and Kent Cassidy called for a "brandy and soda" before starting upon his gallop in the Park.

He waited, of course, to take a second and a third drink, as was his custom, and this consumed half an hour.

Then he was lighting a cigar, to go out and mount his horse, which a club servant was holding for him around at the side door, when a chorus of voices cried:

"Here she comes again!"

This time she was not walking.

But she was seated in an exquisite shell-like phaeton, holding the ribbons over a pair of high-spirited horses.

By her side sat an elderly lady, well-dressed and serene-looking, and in the "rumble" was a "tiger" in livery, and as silent and motionless as a statue, as that ilk are trained to be, when their services are not needed.

The lady had changed her kid gloves for a pair of white gauntlets, and her bonnet for a very stylish hat; but she was the same who had passed up an hour before on foot, there was no denying that fact.

She drove with both grace and skill, and laid the whip sharply upon one of the horses that shied, at a piece of fluttering paper as he passed the club.

Passing down the avenue a few blocks she turned and came back.

As she repassed the club, Kent Cassidy left it, mounted his waiting horse and went on in pursuit, with the firm resolve that he would know who the beautiful lady was, and where she dwelt.

Kent Cassidy was an elegant form, and possessed a very handsome face.

He had been a cadet at West Point, but was given the chance of resigning, or being dismissed, from some wild freak he had gotten into, and then his father had sent him West to take charge of a ranch, but had been forced to recall him on account of his wild ways and recklessness.

His West Point and frontier experience had taught him how to ride splendidly, and he was certainly one to attract attention on horseback.

As he passed the phaeton his horse made a plunge and he had an opportunity to show off his fine horsemanship, which he did not lose sight of.

Riding on into the Park, he had not gone far, before he heard cries of alarm behind him.

Glancing back, he saw teams wheeling out to the right and left, to avoid contact with a pair of runaway horses that were coming at full speed along the drive.



One glance showed Kent Cassidy that it was the team of the beautiful driver, whom, after a rapid gallop, now checked to a slow pace, he had been waiting for, to come up with him.

She was doing so now at a terrific pace.

A glance showed Kent Cassidy that the fair driver had not lost her presence of mind, but was trying, in vain, however, to check the runaway horses.

Her companion, the elderly lady, had sunk back upon the seat, wholly unable to move, in her fright, and with pallid face and starting eyes, was staring at the horses and expecting instant death.

The "Tiger" had left the rumble the moment the horses had started to run, frightened at an awkward driver's having driven up against them.

A steep and winding hill in the Park was before them, and if they went down that at their mad speed, they would surely crash into some vehicle and the end would come right speedily.

All this Kent Cassidy coolly took in in a moment of time.

He was a man of nerve, and fearless, and he decided to act, at the same time congratulating himself upon the chance having been so fortunately thrown in his way.

As the runaways neared him, he drove spurs into his horse, and in an instant was alongside of them.

"Hold hard to the reins, madam, and I will aid you to stop them," he said, quietly.

As he spoke he leant over and grasped the bit of one of the horses, and so firm and strong was the pull he gave, that the horses were brought to a halt before they had gone much further, and upon the top of the hill.

"Fate has been good to me to-day," muttered Kent Cassidy, feeling that he had saved the beautiful maiden from death, whom he had fallen in love with at his first glance at her face an hour before.

The one whose life he had saved was she who had come to play the part of Queen Estevan, the Mexican heiress.

#### CHAPTER XXXIII.

##### A SISTER'S LOVE.

JULE CASSIDY arrived home, after her serious adventure at the Lonsdale burying-ground, considerably unnerved, and she went to her room to try and calm herself before the coming of her father later in the afternoon.

Stone Vale was a handsome mansion, roomy, elegantly furnished, with a large conservatory, a billiard-room, ten-pin alley and spacious grounds about it.

It was built of stone, and stood just at the entrance of a romantic vale, and hence its name.

Before its doors a velvet-like lawn, broken here and there with *parterres* of flowers and plants, stretched down to the hill overhanging the river, and in the rear were spacious stables in which were horses and carriages for the use of the master, his son and daughter.

Judge Cassidy was a man verging on toward three-score and ten.

He had married late in life, and his wife had been a devoted wife and mother up to the day of her death, which had occurred when Jule was thirteen years of age.

Kent Cassidy was six years older than his sister, and his father had been very proud of him as a boy and youth; but he had developed into a spendthrift and began a life of dissipation after reaching his twenty-second year.

His father's confidence in him had caused him to make the will in his favor referred to by the unknown chief of the Water Wolves, and giving him full power over even his sister's inheritance.

Hoping the young man would see the evil of his ways, the judge had never changed his will, though promising himself he would do so each time he heard of some new, mad escapade of his son's.

The fond father had paid many thousands of dollars of gambling-debts for his wild son, and although he allowed him an income of six thousand a year, was constantly called on for more money.

Nor was this all, for Kent, knowing the liberal allowance of "pin money" given by his father to Jule, was wont to borrow from her about two-thirds of what she got.

The judge took great comfort in his beautiful daughter after she came home from school and in his luxurious home.

His income ran among the hundreds of thousands, and so he did not feel what he was constantly called upon to give to Kent, although it reached large sums at times.

But of late, to keep his spendthrift son from getting into serious trouble, so Kent himself reported, the judge had given him one check for ten thousand dollars.

"Now this is the last dollar for six months excepting your monthly income," the judge had said.

Kent had said he was satisfied, and yet a week after "struck the old man for a loan," as he expressed it.

But the judge was firm.

Kent pleaded, but to no use, and so he had to seek funds elsewhere.

The truth was he lived in the most luxurious style in the city.

He had an elegant suite of rooms, kept two servants and his horses, a driving pair, a saddle animal and one for city work in a coupé.

He breakfasted at his rooms, but dined and had supper at his club.

Then he bet largely on the races, gambled heavily among his intimates, and very readily got rid of five times the income allowed him by his generous father.

With a home within driving distance of the city, he would live in town, going to Stone Vale only once a week to dine with his father and sister, and upon such occasions almost invariably asking the former for a loan, for he never considered it otherwise than as money lent him out of what would be his inheritance.

Upon the afternoon that Jule returned from Cedar Hall, the scene of her adventure, Kent came up to Stone Vale and heard her story.

He dearly loved his sister, and was deeply moved by the peril she had been in; but she saw that he was worried about something else, and continually watched the gateway for the coming of the carriage, which had gone to the depot for the judge.

At last the judge returned, and he was shocked at what he heard, and said bluntly:

"God bless that detective! he acted bravely, and I shall call to-morrow at his office and thank him."

"I don't remember to have seen him, though I have lately heard of some important cases he has successfully brought to an end."

"Do you know him, my son?"

"What did you say his name was, Jule?"

"Frank Ferret."

"A good name for a detective, certainly; but I haven't the honor of his acquaintance."

"In fact I fight shy of Secret Service men and the police; but I will also call and pay my respects, for his noble conduct toward you, sister, for it was deuced clever in him not to ring you in as a witness, and to keep your name from being bandied about the papers and among the clubs."

"I appreciate his very handsome conduct in this," the judge had said, offering his arm to his daughter, as the butler announced dinner.

All through the meal, however, Kent Cassidy seemed *distracted* and Jule felt there was something upon his mind.

After dinner, while Jule went for a stroll along the river-bank, to enjoy the sunset behind the Palisades, Kent sat down on the piazza for a smoke with his father.

Then the young man acted upon the advice of one who has said:

"Never ask a favor of a hungry man."

His father had dined and seemed in good humor, and so the young spendthrift asked him for a loan of five thousand dollars.

It was refused.

"But I *must* have it, father."

"I will keep my word, Kent, and not a dollar will I give you."

Kent Cassidy knew that his father meant what he said, so he arose and walked off to join his sister.

"Sis, I've got to raise some money within the next ten days, and I want you to help me."

"I've got a couple of hundred, brother, which you can have."

"No, it is thousands, not hundreds that I need."

"I cannot help you, I am sorry to say, brother Kent."

"Ask father."

"I have and he refuses."

"He thinks you are extravagant."

"I must live."

"You certainly do, and in splendid style, brother."

"Well, I need five thousand dollars, and must have it within ten days."

Jule could not help him, and so Kent called for his horses and drove back to the city that night.

It was a week before he appeared again at Stone Vale, and his sister greeted him most affectionately, while she said:

"It was a brave act, brother, and the papers are loud in your praise."

"But who is this beautiful Mexican girl, Señorita Estevan that you saved from death?"

"She is a most beautiful being, Jule, and as good as she is lovely."

"Her father was a Mexican of vast wealth, and her mother an American, and she has their fortune in her own right."

"She invited me to call, and her aunt, the lady who was with her, lives with her."

"Her home is splendidly furnished, and I tell you I am going to make myself at home there."

"Fact is, Jule, I'm going in to win, for the girl is really in love with me for saving her from a fearful death, as she puts it, when, fact is, I believe she'd have stopped the beasts by herself, only I saw my chance and seized it."

"Well, brother, I only hope she is a good, true woman if you love her, for your sake."

"Where is father?" said Kent, abruptly changing the subject.

"He has telegraphed that he has been called to Philadelphia, and will not be back for two days."

"My God!"

"Why, Kent, what is it?"

"I've got to have ten thousand dollars by the time the bank opens to-morrow morning, or I am ruined!"

"Oh, brother!"

"It is true, Jule, and I look to you to help me."

"How can I?"

"Have you no money in bank?"

"Brother, I have given you all as I got it, and it was that which I meant to put in bank."

"Then I am ruined, dishonored, for my checks are out, payable to-morrow, and I have no money to meet them."

Jule turned pale, and then, after a moment of silence, she said:

"Brother, I have diamonds, as you know, that are worth more than you need."

"Take them and get some one to loan you the money on them, only don't let me lose them, for the necklace, earrings and bracelets were mother's, you know."

"Bless you, Jule, you are a jewel worth more than all!"

"You have saved me!"

Half an hour after the selfish man left Stone Vale carrying his sister's diamonds with him.

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

##### A SURPRISE.

RUTH GLYNDON sat in her parlor at home awaiting the coming of her husband for dinner.

He was very irregular in his habits, often not coming home to dinner, and now and then remaining until very late at night.

But she never upbraided, merely took all that occurred in an indifferent manner.

While waiting she ran her fingers over the strings of her guitar, which she had picked up, but in an absent kind of a way.

She had not touched the guitar nor sung since the night the words of the little ballad, "Tender and True," had been answered by the appearance of Douglas Drew before her.

Now the scene, as it had occurred that night came before her, and she sighed.

Her soldier lover had gone back to his regiment, and she had seen by the papers that there had been an uprising of the Indians along the frontier, and the gallant Fifth Cavalry, to which he belonged, had been sent against them.

Grayson Glyndon had seemed to take pleasure in reading her this, and the report that it was feared that the Fifth Cavalry would be outnumbered and massacred by the red-skins.

Her husband was recovering from his wound, but she did not refer to it, other than to ask him now and then if he suffered with it, and he little dreamed that she knew all about the manner in which he had been thus crippled.

Now as she sat there waiting, her thoughts were so buried in the past that she did not hear her husband enter and started, as he said:

"In dreamland, Ruth?"

"I was lost in thought, Grayson."

"But you seem pale; does your arm pain you?"

"No, but I have had much to worry me."

"What is it?"

"I will tell you about it after dinner, for you must go with me to-morrow to Lawyer Lockwood's office, as there have most important matters come up that need looking after."

"I hope nothing very serious, as I should judge by your looks."

"We'll talk it over after dinner," was the reply, and in his courtly manner he offered his arm and led her to the dining-room.

Dinner at the Glyndon mansion was a very stately affair, for Grayson Glyndon always wished it so.

Maddox, in his full-dress, looked most dignified, and his assistant did all the work, under his eye, excepting the serving of the wines.

This Maddox did, and with such grace that his master never noticed that a fourth of a bottle always remained for the servitor.

After the servants had been dismissed, Grayson Glyndon lighted a cigar, and began to sip his coffee and cognac, burnt.

His wife toyed with a cup of coffee and a tiny gold spoon, and awaited, for she saw that her husband really had something to communicate.

At last he spoke, and in a very deliberate tone.

"Ruth, when I married you, as you remember, I told you that the bulk of my fortune was all tied up in mining stocks?"

"I recall it, as also I told you that what I had would be amply sufficient for all needs."

"True, you were most generous, Ruth; but my mines have turned out a dead loss, and I am really worth nothing, just now, but some mining share stock which may or may not, be valuable in the future."

"Well, I certainly have enough," was the reply.

"You think so, and so have I thought so, but we are both mistaken."

"Mistaken?" asked Ruth, arching her beautiful brows with surprise.

"Yes."



"My father certainly left an enormous fortune."

"So it was supposed; but I received a letter yesterday from Ingersoll Lockwood, who has managed your father's estate, asking me to call at his office."

"I did so, and he made known to me some facts which I had overlooked, and which to-morrow you will hear from him in full."

"The truth is, Ruth, your father left a will that read that you were to inherit his fortune, after all debts were paid, excepting the property of Cedar Hall, which a codicil to the will disposed of after a certain time."

"Now, the debts have been paid, and there was a vastly larger sum due than I had any idea of, and the fortune which was left, which is spoken of in the will as 'bonds, money and jewels,' have never been found, and your inheritance amounts now to about ten thousand dollars, above this house that you live in."

"In fact, Ruth, you have a very small legacy," and there was a sneer in the man's voice as he spoke, and it did not pass unnoticed by his wife.

#### CHAPTER XXXV. THE LOST HERITAGE.

THAT it was an entire surprise to Ruth Glyndon to hear what her husband told her about her inheritance, goes without saying, for she had believed herself to be possessed of millions.

Never really knowing the worth of money, or caring, he had given her father's lawyer, Ingersoll Lockwood, *carte blanche* to arrange all business matters with her husband.

She had all bills turned over to Grayson Glyndon, and what she wanted she purchased on credit, the prices not even being asked.

If she wished money she asked for it and it was always forthcoming, so that to learn that she really had but a few thousands left was a great blow to her.

She seemed to feel, too, that her husband had prized her for her riches, for she judged him by the sneer in his tone when he told her how little she had left.

So she was most anxious to accompany him to the office of her lawyer the next day and know the truth.

Ingersoll Lockwood, Esquire, attorney-at-law, sat in his handsome office when the cards of Grayson Glyndon and his wife were brought in. They were at once admitted and greeted by the handsome attorney in his most genial manner.

"My husband reports to me, Mr. Lockwood, that he has married one who has proven to be more of a pauper than an heiress," said Ruth, with some bitterness.

"Not so bad as that, I assure you, Mrs. Glyndon; but your father at the last moment, after the death of his former attorney, left his affairs in my hands."

"From what he told me I considered that he had a very vast fortune."

"Consisting of what, may I ask, sir?"

"Well, there was a large sum in bank, some eighty-odd thousand dollars, the house that you live in in the city, the estate of Cedar Hall, and, as I understood him, some bonds, jewels and money kept together."

"And what really had he?"

"I found the bank money all right, the mansion you reside in is clear and in your name, and the estate of Cedar Hall has nothing against it; but nowhere can be found the bonds, jewels and money."

"Were not the latter in his safe?"

"No, for you gave me the keys, you remember, and the safe was opened before witnesses and an inventory taken of all found there."

"And in the bank?"

"Nothing of the nature as to the things to which I refer can be found."

"Nor in a safe deposit?" asked Grayson Glyndon.

"No, for I have personally visited all of them, as I have other places where I supposed the things might be heard of."

"This is strange," said Ruth.

"It is most strange, Mrs. Glyndon."

"You have paid up all the debts of the estate?"

"Every dollar."

"And the small legacies left the servants?"

"Have been paid from the fund in bank, and it leaves about ten thousand dollars to your credit, after deducting expenses and my fee, which will be one thousand dollars, if you are content with that."

"Certainly, and it is modest payment for your work."

"It should have been larger, I assure you, had I found the lost property referred to," said the lawyer with a smile.

"Is no sum set on the missing property in the will?"

"It is referred to as the 'balance of my property in bonds, jewels and money, being the great bulk of my estate,' so it must be a very large amount, as Cedar Hall, your city home and the money in bank were fully half a million in value."

"I cannot understand it," said Ruth.

"Nor I, Mrs. Glyndon, and I would suggest that an immediate search be made of Cedar

Hall mansion, for, as Mr. Glyndon has doubtless told you, I have sold it."

"Sold Cedar Hall?" cried Ruth.

"No, he did not tell me a word about it; but why should you sell it?" and the tears came into the beautiful eyes of Ruth.

"I have but obeyed the injunctions of the will, Mrs. Glyndon."

"I am so sorry, for my grandfather was born there, and father also, and it is the birthplace of my poor brother and myself."

"There too, in the little burying-ground lie the ashes of my grandparents, father, mother, and a little sister and brother of mine who died when wee children."

"The cemetery is not included in the sale, Mrs. Glyndon, for it is reserved, with an acre of land about, and a strip of land allowing free access from the highway."

"I am glad of this at least, sir; but the money from the sale will certainly be a handsome sum for me."

"I see that you have not understood the will, Mrs. Glyndon, and your husband made the same mistake, for the estate of Cedar Hall was not left to you."

"Not left to me?"

"No, madam, a codicil to the will left Cedar Hall, and its surrounding acres, excepting the cemetery and land reserved, as I stated, to be sold after a certain time, and the money to be invested as an inheritance to your brother, Lionel Lonsdale."

"Oh! how glad I am to hear that," cried Ruth.

"If, after five years from the sale of Cedar Hall, your brother does not return, he is to be considered as dead, and the money is to go to the founding of an institution for the reformation and education of wayward boys."

"Heaven grant that he return to enjoy his inheritance, and it makes me very happy to feel that my father relented at last and did not wholly disinherit my poor brother."

"You still have hopes that he is alive, Mrs. Glyndon?" asked Lawyer Lockwood.

"Oh, yes; I cannot believe brother Lionel is dead, nor have I ever had one thought that he did ought to cause my father's anger."

"He is dead, that is certain, or long ago he would have returned."

"It is ten years now since he left home," said Grayson Glyndon.

"Yes, ten years; but I shall hope for his return for ten years longer; but, Mr. Lockwood, was the sum realized for dear old Cedar Hall a large one?"

"It was in cash, and just a quarter of a million dollars, which I consider a large sum."

"Yes, and it gives to poor Lionel a fortune, and I am so glad, even though I have little left."

"But who was the purchaser, Mr. Lockwood, may I ask?"

"A Mexican gentleman, who has only lately come to New York."

"He saw Cedar Hall advertised for sale, and came to see me about it."

"I went with him to visit the place, and he at once said he would take it, and very generously said that he would keep the little cemetery in order."

"The next day he called with his check, and the property became his."

"What was his name, Lockwood?" eagerly asked Grayson Glyndon.

"His name is *Marco Del Monte*," was the lawyer's reply.

#### CHAPTER XXVI.

##### A CHANGE OF MASTERS.

AT the suggestion of Lawyer Lockwood, Ruth Glyndon and her husband accompanied him the next day to Cedar Hall that they might have a thorough search of the house for the missing legacy.

They went up on the steamer to the nearest village, and drove from there in a hack.

Old Thurber and Polly had heard the news, for the Mexican purchaser had been up to look over his estate, and had told them to remain in his service, so the old man explained to Ruth, at the same time telling her that the Señor Del Monte was a most perfect gentleman and as kind as he could be.

"He's as handsome as a picture," Miss Ruth, said Polly.

The house was opened by Thurber, and the search was begun.

Every nook and corner of the colonel's room, his library and elsewhere was searched, but without result.

The treasure could not be found, and at last they had to give it up.

Lawyer Lockwood had a copy of what was said in the will about the "bonds, jewels and money," but it gave no clue, for, if such had existed, all had most mysteriously disappeared.

Old Polly had a tempting lunch for them as they finished their search, and as they were ready to depart Marco Del Monte suddenly entered.

He had just landed from his little steam-yacht, and his architect, landscape-gardener and the house-furnisher were with him, all come to get their orders as to what he wished done, for the

house and grounds were to be overhauled and greatly improved.

As the lawyer greeted him Ruth started, and her face flushed, for she recognized at a glance the very handsome horseman whom she had twice seen in the Park the day she had met Douglas Drew there.

Would he remember her, she wondered?

Would he refer to it, if he did?

Lawyer Lockwood said, pleasantly:

"We have taken possession, as you see, Señor Del Monte; but, as I told you we would do, we came to look up the property which cannot be found; but let me present to you my friends and clients, Mr. and Mrs. Grayson Glyndon."

Grayson Glyndon had also started at seeing the Mexican.

He remembered that he had last met him on the field when Señor Del Monte had been the second of Douglas Drew.

Of course he would remember him, and he might let the secret out as to why he carried his arm in a sling.

He determined to check this if he could, so merely bowed at the introduction of Ingersoll Lockwood, as though he had never before met the Mexican.

But Señor Del Monte said, pleasantly:

"I have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Glyndon before."

"I trust your arm gives you no trouble now, sir."

Grayson Glyndon could have sworn, but he said, with a meaning glance toward his wife:

"Oh, no, sir; the fracture is about healed."

The Mexican then turned toward Ruth, and showing no sign of recognition, said:

"Your home here, señora, must have been a very happy one, and when I have it in order it will give me pleasure to welcome you and your husband as my guests, if you will honor me."

"You are very kind, Señor Del Monte, and I confess to a curiosity to see the improvements you will make."

"It is lovely as it is; but I shall make some additions to the house and wholly refurnish it, from cellar to garret, so if you have any favorite pieces of furniture you wish to claim, any paintings or *bric à brac*, they are at your service with more than pleasure."

"You purchased the house as it stands, sir."

"Yes, and hence place all in it that you may wish at your service," was the gallant reply.

"You are most generous, Señor Del Monte, and I will accept of your kindness, for there is a landscape scene here in which the two figures are portraits of my brother and myself, it being my father's wish to have them so painted."

"It is a large painting, a scene from the front piazza, and my brother, who was my senior by a number of years, was seated upon a rustic bench reading to me, while I sat at his feet."

"I saw the painting when last I was here with Mr. Lockwood; it hangs in the upper hall."

"Yes; and can I have it?"

"Assuredly, and all else that you care to take," was the response.

"You are most kind, Señor Del Monte, and I am glad to know that you intend retaining in your service old Thurber and his wife."

"They have been faithful servants in our family for thirty years."

"I took a fancy to the old couple, and Thurber shall be my major-domo, about our place, and Polly my housekeeper, while they shall still retain their cottage to dwell in."

"I am glad that Cedar Hall will have so good a master," said Ruth with deep feeling, for over her rushed a flood of memories of the past.

"And may I ask if you will permit me to improve the little family burying-ground in my own way, Mrs. Glyndon, for, though not included in my purchase, it will be surrounded by my land, and I wish to make some improvements in that direction?"

"Do as you deem best, Señor Del Monte," was the low reply, and just then Grayson Glyndon and Lawyer Lockwood approached, they having gone to search in another place, where Glyndon had suddenly thought the missing property might be found.

But the missing fortune was not there, and the party, at the invitation of Señor Del Monte, dismissed the village hack, and returned in his steam yacht to the city, leaving him at Cedar Hall with his workmen.

#### CHAPTER XXXVII.

##### "STAND AND DELIVER!"

KENT CASSIDY had told his sister the truth, for he had gotten himself into an awkward scrape.

After meeting the pretended Mexican heiress, Quena Estevan, as he had, he had fallen desperately in love with her.

She had little dreamed that the handsome horseman, who had so gallantly rescued her from certainly the presence of death, was the very man she had been urged on to catch in her net, by the unknown chief of the Water Wolves, and, when she asked the name of her preserver, he had told her, she flushed with surprise and pleasure, and he had at once been asked to call.

Kent Cassidy knew how to win his way to a



woman's good opinion, and the next morning had sent an exquisite bouquet, with his compliments, and a note requesting to know if the Señorita Queena Estevan and her aunt had recovered from their shock of the day before.

A little scented missive was returned, written in a lovely hand, and requesting Mr. Kent Cassidy's company to dinner that day, *en famille*.

The papers had been full of the "daring rescue," as it was called, and Kent Cassidy found himself a hero, and was envied by all of his club friends.

He went to dine with the lovely girl, and his welcome was a most gracious one and he remained until late.

"Aunt Phoebe," as Queena called her alleged aunt, was a pleasant old lady, one who knew how to keep a secret where it concerned herself; and, reduced in circumstances, perfectly willing to play protector to a young and beautiful girl for the consideration of a hundred dollars a week, her wardrobe and the best of living.

She saw no harm in Queena's actions, and had no idea just what her "little game" was.

All she knew was that an agent had employed her at a very handsome salary to be an aunt, and she had been given a snug sum and sent to a fashionable dressmaker, after which she had gone to a hotel in Philadelphia, where she had met her pretended niece.

She had liked the girl, and Queena had taken a fancy to her, so matters worked well thus far.

From the hotel they had gone to New York, and to the very cosy home on an uptown street which Queena's agent had furnished and ready for her.

More "Aunt Phoebe Fenton" did not know, nor was she inquisitive enough to risk losing her good home in trying to find out.

Kent Cassidy had been charmed with Aunt Phoebe, especially as she did not remain in the parlor but a short while after dinner.

He had a fine tenor voice and sung the sweetest songs, accompanying himself upon the piano.

He also sung duets with Queena, and then, quite an artist, he sketched her upon a page of music, so that he made himself most charming upon his first call, while, having met as they did, there was no formality between them.

A day or two after, he tortured the club men by driving Queena by in her own phaeton, behind the runaway team, and the next day they passed on horseback, and the young bloods fell more in love with her than ever, after seeing her mounted.

In the mean time Kent Cassidy had not forgotten that he had five thousand dollars to pay within a given time.

As his father would not help him, he tried to win the sum at cards, to pay the debt, which was nothing but what he had already lost at cards.

Instead of winning, he had left the table just that much more involved, and he was nearly desperate.

In his distress he thought of an idea.

He knew he could raise money on a three-day check, for a good interest, so he gave a check on his bank, where he had not a dollar just then deposited.

He got the money, paid his gambling debts, and then went to his father, to confess what he had done and beg him to save him.

His father's absence made him almost wild, when Jule, in her sisterly love, came to his rescue.

With diamonds that he could readily raise fifteen thousand dollars on, heirlooms some of them from grandmother to daughter, he started back to the city.

"I will get the value of these, deposit it all in the bank, so that my check will be all right, and I'll have a good stake to again try my luck with."

"I must have money now, of all times, for my love affair with the beautiful Queena is progressing splendidly, and I will soon have to begin to lavish presents upon her."

"Wonder how much she is worth?"

"She's deuced clever, very pretty, has a most graceful form and is accomplished, so she would make a brilliant wife."

"I wish I knew just how long her purse is, for if I have to marry I might as well be tied to one who has a handsome income."

"She must be immensely rich, though, for she told me her agent gave a thousand dollars for that pair she drives, and when I told her I did not like her phaeton, she simply asked me to go with her to the best manufactory and she would buy another."

"So her income must be large, for she keeps five horses, a coachman and tiger, a butler and two other servants."

"I'm half in love with her, and I think I shall have to allow myself to get quite gone on the sweet foreigner, though she looks as though she had the temper of the devil if she once got fairly started."

"Still, no one can be perfect and I guess I will—"

"Stand and deliver!"

The words broke rudely in upon the reverie of Kent Cassidy, and their tone was sharp, stern and threatening.

He was in a lonely part of the highway, and

the heavy trees obscured the moonlight, while he knew that a bad bit of road lay just before him, which he dared not drive over faster than a walk.

He saw by the side of his buggy a tall form, and his horse had come to a sudden halt.

The man who had brought him to a stand, held a revolver leveled at his head.

Kent Cassidy was not armed.

Had he been the chances are that he would have resisted.

As it was he knew that he was at the mercy of the man who ordered him to "stand and deliver."

So he concluded to compromise, and said in an indifferent tone:

"Well, Sir Knight of the Road, you have caught me nicely."

"I so intended, so give up your gold rather than your life, unless you love the former best," was the stern rejoinder.

"I love both, my lawless friend; but I cling to life just now, so here is my pocketbook."

He handed out his pocketbook as he spoke.

"How much does it contain?" asked the man, grasping it with one hand, while with the other he still kept his pistol covering Kent Cassidy.

"About a hundred, I guess."

"You have more with you?"

"No."

"You have."

"Upon my honor that is all the money I have, unless it is some change in my pocket."

"Young man, by a path through these woods, it is just three quarters of a mile to your home, for you are Kent Cassidy, while around the road, the way you came it is three miles."

"What has that to do with this case of highway robbery?"

"I saw through an open window, your sister give to you a lot of jewelry, which you rolled up and put in a small hand sachel."

"That is what I want, and I ran here across the hills to head you off and get it, rather than have to rob the house to-night in the absence of your father."

"Curse you! I'll die before I give you that."

"You shall die then, young man."

There was a ring in the voice that told Kent Cassidy that the man was not to be trifled with, and he hesitated as he was about to seize his whip and urge his horse on, risking a shot.

"Would you kill me if I refused?"

"As I would a dog, for I want that sachel, as it contains a fortune to me, and it is but little to a rich man like you."

"Here, take your pocketbook and give me the sachel."

"Quick! hand it out!"

He tossed the pocketbook in his lap as he spoke and shoved the muzzle of the revolver nearer the face of Kent Cassidy.

"Will you keep the jewelry for me until I can send you its value in money?"

"How can I?"

"Take my pocketbook, live on that, and give me a week to send you the value in gold."

"No, I am not to be caught that way."

"Give me the sachel, and this speaks next time."

And he shook his revolver.

"Curse you, take it!"

And the sachel was taken from the seat by his side and thrown out upon the ground.

"Thank you! just wait until I see if this is the right one."

The man stooped, though not once lowering his revolver, and took up the sachel.

Holding it up before him, he said:

"This is the one, for I remember it was a lady's velvet hand-bag."

"Then stand aside and let me pass, you devil!" hissed Kent Cassidy.

"Certainly, now," was the response, and the enraged young man went on his way, a mocking laugh ringing in his ears from the triumphant highwayman.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### A MOONLIGHT CHASE.

BRICK BENSON was very proud of having been selected by the unknown chief as captain of the sloop Owl.

He at once selected his crew, making them four men instead of two, the number Skipper Kit had been content with, and the next day he overhauled the Owl from keel to truck, getting her in perfect trim.

He had been a sailor for a number of years and had been a mate on board a West Indian trading schooner, but killed his captain in a quarrel one night when in port, and since then had been a fugitive from justice.

Anxious to please the chief, he had decided to promptly obey all orders, so he had his crew report on board at sunset.

Leaving two of the crew on board he went to the Seaman's Paradise with the others, and securing a large cask sent the two men in to open the tomb, unscrew the iron coffin and take out the body of the unfortunate Kit, while he had a bottle of wine with Mistress Betty.

As for the landlady, she had been blue all day.

She had, as one of the legends, had it report-

ed to her by Rats, of the end of Captain Kit, and it had fairly frightened her.

And so she was glad of a chance to talk over the painful affair with "Captain" Brick Benson.

She had invited him into the private office, and opened a bottle of her best, and they were drawing very near the last drop when Rats came in, white as a ghost.

"Oh, captain!" he gasped.

"Well, Rats?"

"Oh, Mistress Betty!"

"What is it, you fool?"

But Rats did not speak until Mistress Betty stepped outside to the stove and brought in a pot of scalding water and a ladle.

"Will you find your tongue, you idiot?"

Rats saw the steaming water and he found it.

"Captain Kit was not dead, after all."

It was their time to turn pale now, and Rats went on to report how they had opened the vault, then the coffin, and found that he had returned to consciousness and died in fearful agony.

"This must be reported to the Wolves at the next meeting, and my word for it there will be no more treachery," said Landlady Betty.

Brick Benson thought so, too, and asked for another bottle to steady his nerves, and Rats also needed a nerve, while Mistress Betty took several.

Then Rats was sent back to the underground chamber to bid the men roll the cask out in which the body of the unfortunate wretch had been placed, and half an hour after it was on a cart on the way to the sloop.

It was placed in the boat upon reaching the pier and thus carried out to the Owl, Captain Brick Benson and the two men with him being very uneasy the while, when they recalled the horrible death of the man they were carrying out to sink to a deep-sea grave.

Once the barrel was lowered into the hold, the sail was set on the Owl and she went skimming down the East River toward New York Bay.

It was a lovely moonlight night, and a fair breeze was blowing, so that Brick Benson and his crew of sailors felt in their element once more, though they hated the idea of having a dead body below decks.

"I tell you, mates, it's bad luck always, to carry a dead body on shipboard," said one of the men, and all agreed with him.

The Owl seemed fairly to fly over the waters, and soon had passed Governor's Island and was heading for the Narrows.

"We can make the run out a league into blue water and then put back in time to reach an anchorage inside the Horseshoe before dawn, and next night run up to town, for I don't wish to attract no more attention to this craft than there is need for," said Skipper Benson, and his crew echoed his sentiments.

"Yonder craft is walking after us very slick, cap'n," said one of the men, referring to a little sloop that was coming along in their wake.

The master at once turned his glass upon the stranger and said:

"She's one o' them gentlemen's yachts, which is gettin' so common now in New York waters."

"She comes a-boomin', whatever she is," said another.

"Maybe we had better set topsail and flying-jib, for she is walking up on us, and she might not be as pleasurable as she looks, though I think she's a gent's yacht, going for a moonlight sail with a party o' ladies and their beaux on board."

"She may be, but she's been following us since we got up anchor."

So the extra canvas was spread and the Owl bent more gracefully to the breeze, and also she sped through the waters at an increased speed.

But the yacht also set her topsail and it took but a short while for those on the Owl to see that she was still gaining.

Captain Brick and his men now grew most anxious, and every stitch of sail was set that the sloop could carry, but the yacht still gained.

"That hain't no pleasure-party, mates, for there's a dozen men on yonder craft, and I tell you she's a chasin' us," said Brick Benson, after a long look through his glass.

At his words his crew turned pale, for there was no doubt now in their minds but that the yacht was in chase, and for doing so there could be but one purpose—the Owl was suspected of being a lawless craft.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### A TRAMP'S GENEROSITY.

AFTER the departure of her brother with her jewels, Jule was not sure that she had done right in giving them to him.

She knew the liberal allowance that her father gave him to live on, and how much more he had gotten in small sums and large ones for him, for Jule kept the books, and acted as the private secretary of the judge.

In this way she had learned how extravagant her brother had been.



She felt that her father was watching him closely, and knew better how to manage him than she did.

She was also aware that he had made up his mind not to give him any more money to squander, at least for the present, and she heartily wished that she could recall her jewels.

"Had I given him the money I would say let it go; but I must have my jewels back, for I would not lose those my mother left me for a fortune ten times their value.

"Kent will pay his debts, yes, but it will make him even more reckless than before, and I will thus only have encouraged his extravagance.

"But how can I get them back?

"Ah! I have it! I will ask father for some money to invest for myself, telling him it is a secret, and I'll go to the city and make Kent get me my diamonds, telling him just what I have done, and he must help me to lay up the money to pay father back.

"Yes, I will do this, for it is the only way, I fear, I can get them."

Having made up her mind as to her course, upon her father's return, Jule Cassidy did not worry any more about the subject, and the next day took her little easel and portfolio and went to the woods to sketch, for she was quite an artist.

Having found a good bit of scenery, she sat down to her work, and working diligently for several hours had just put the finishing touches upon her landscape, when a voice said near her:

"Now that's what I call a real good bit o' drawin', miss, if I might be so bold as to say so."

Jule uttered a slight cry of surprise, and turning beheld a man within a few feet of her, critically surveying her work.

He was a large man, uncouth-looking and ragged.

His shoes were down in the heel, his hat was torn and the rim hung over his face, and he carried a bundle on the end of a stick resting on his shoulder.

He was along in years, though, for his hair and beard, unkempt as they were, were turning white.

There was that in his face, however, which did not look evil, and his manner of speaking had not been rude.

That he belonged to the *genus* tramp, Jule did not doubt; but, after her first little cry of alarm she showed a bold front, for it was her custom to always carry with her a small rifle which her father had bought for her, and it leant against the easel within easy reach of her hand.

"I am glad you like the sketch, sir; but I had no idea that my work had an appreciative observer," she said, with a smile.

"It were wrong, miss, perhaps, in me to take you by surprise; but I seen yer at work, and I was afeard you might run if yer got a sight o' me, for I hain't an encouragin' sight for a young lady to set eyes on out in the woods.

"But there's no harm in me, I pledges you, tramp though I is, and I'd like to ask you how I can find the mansion of Stone Vale?"

"It is my home, sir, and if you will come there you shall have rest and some money, for you doubtless need assistance."

"You have a kind and a brave heart, young miss, and I will accept your invitation."

"Were you going to Stone Vale, as you asked me how to find your way there?"

"Yes, I was going there to see Miss Cassidy."

"I am Julia Cassidy, so what did you want with me?" asked Jule, in surprise.

"I'll soon tell you, miss, if you'll promise not to betray me, for I don't want no law bounds set on my trail."

"I have nothing against you, my man."

"Well, miss, does yer promise to let me go my way and no questions asked?"

"I do."

"Well, miss, one o' my order, the Order o' Ancient Tramps, for we hain't young, was nosin' round to see how he could get a little raise to help us through the coming winter months, when trampin' hain't healthy, and he overheard a conversation atween you and your brother."

"Indeed! when was this?" and Jule's face flushed.

"It was yesterday evening, miss, and he heard your brother tell you a ghost story about a scrape he'd got into, and—"

"Where was this friend of yours?"

"Hidin' among the evergreens near the piazza, miss."

"Pray, go on, sir."

"And you told your brother you would help him out, and you went off and got diamonds your mother had left you and others that had been presents to you from your father and rich kinsfolk, and showed 'em to your brother, and they fairly blinded the eyes o' my friend in the bushes."

"Well, miss, he seen you put 'em in a velvet hand-bag and give 'em to your brother, who took 'em and said he would go back to the city."

"Now, my friend knew a short cut, over the hill, and when your brother came along in the

moonlight he just was there on the roadside and made him stand and deliver, miss."

"Robbed my brother?" gasped Jule, turning white.

"He did for your brother, miss, just what he had done for you, and he got the jewels."

The tears trickled silently from the eyes of Jule Cassidy, and she tried in vain to conceal her deep emotion at the loss of her precious gems.

"Don't cry, miss, for I hain't told you all yet, for, you see, when my pard told me what he done, I told him you was one, I had heard, as never went back on ther poor and spoke as sweet to a humble man as you did to a millionaire, and that it was roblin' you, and not your brother, and I asked him to give me the jewels that I might bring 'em back and make you a present of 'em, if you'll accept a present from a tramp."

As he spoke, the man took the bundle from his stick, opened it and handed out the velvet sachel.

The key was tied to a handle of it, and opening it before the astonished eyes of Jule Cassidy, he said, in his quaint, earnest way:

"Here's the hand-bag, miss, and you knows what was in it, so count 'em and see if they is in there all right, for this is a tramp's present to a millionaire's daughter as deserves 'em."

#### CHAPTER XL.

##### JULE CASSIDY'S STRATEGY.

WHEN Jule Cassidy received at the hands of the tramp, who had surprised her at her sketching, the little velvet sachel containing the very diamonds which she had loaned her brother to raise money on and which she had been so anxious to get back into her keeping, she hardly knew what to say or do.

There they were before her, and no mistake about them, not a piece of jewelry or a stone missing.

The tramp had told her just how he had come in possession of them, and it was cause of congratulation to her that she had never allowed the servants to turn a beggar from her door without a good meal and some money to aid him.

Then, too, she had hunted up the poorest families in the neighborhood and aided them in many little ways, sending the physician of Stone Vale to see the sick and paying his charges.

Now her good deeds were returning to her, her bread cast upon the waters was coming back to her tenfold.

"My good man, it is generous in you, nay, it is more, it is a noble act for you to return me these gems as you do, and gladly will I give you a handsome sum in money for them."

"Where would I do a good deed, miss, if it were for money only I did it?"

"No, I'll take nothing, and the jewels is all your own, so take 'em with you to the house; and all I ask is that you don't always judge a man's character by his clothes, for some tramps is honest clean through, though circumstances has made 'em wanderers about God's green earth."

"I guesses, too, I won't go by and get something to eat, but jog on my way; so good-by, miss, and God bless yer."

In vain was it that Jule Cassidy pleaded with him to take some money and accompany her to the house.

He would not do so, and at last she said:

"Is there no return I can make for your goodness to me, sir?"

"Is that little red ring you wear, miss, a gift you prize very highly?"

It was a single ruby, handsomely set in a mere thread of gold.

It had been given her for a prize at school, and she thought a great deal of it.

Instantly she drew it from her finger and said:

"Take it as a souvenir from me."

"I won it as a prize at school for the best standing in my studies."

"I'll take it, miss, and thank you."

He took the ring, and to her surprise was able to slip it on the little finger of his left hand.

Then he made a bow, tried to take off the ragged hat he wore, and turning, walked away.

"Well!"

It was all that Jule could say for full a minute.

"I do not understand this at all."

"But here are my jewels, every one of them intact, and the tramp has a ring I would not have given my brother had he asked it."

"What a romance, this."

"Well, I will try a little strategy now on my reckless, extravagant brother, for I wish to know just what excuse he will give for the loss of the diamonds, even if he admits it."

"I'll go to the city to-night and have Kent take me to the opera, that's what I'll do, for father will not be back until to-morrow night, and I'll join him at his office and come home with him."

So saying Jule gathered up her traps and went home.

She noticed that from where the tramp had

said his friend was in the shrubbery he could have seen and heard all that passed between her brother and herself, and she knew that he could easily have reached the place in the road where he brought Kent Cassidy to a halt.

An hour after Jule was on her way to the city, and, as there was always a spare room for herself and father in Kent Cassidy's quarters when they chose to visit him, she drove at once to where he lived.

The valet of her brother welcomed her, for his master was out, and Jane the cook came in to ask what she would have for dinner, for the servants very much liked their master's beautiful sister.

Writing a note to her brother she sent it to the club by the valet.

Kent Cassidy turned pale when he saw his sister's writing, and learned that she was in town.

But the note simply said that she had come up to the city for the night, had bought a dress for the opera, and wished him to secure a box, while she had taken possession of his bachelor quarters, and as she could not dine at the club, would be happy to have him dine with her at his own house.

"She knows nothing of the lost jewels; I was fairly frightened," he muttered, and he bit his lips, for he had an engagement to take Queena Estevan to the opera.

How could he manage it?

He did not wish to ask Jule to join them, as she was not known to the Mexican, and then he did not know how Queena would like his having his sister join them, when they were not acquainted.

"I'll get a box, and then I'll see who of my club friends I can ask to escort Jule," he said.

There happened to be a club member who wished to dispose of a box, as he would not be able to attend, and this Kent Cassidy got from him, after which he went to his home to see his sister.

It was with a guilty conscience that he met her, remembering the lost diamonds, but she greeted him pleasantly, and asked:

"And did the jewels help you out, brother?"

"Yes, indeed."

"You got all the money you wished as a loan?"

"Yes, I let a friend have them, and he gave me the ten thousand, while he has them in his safe."

Jule's face clouded, for she had hardly believed that her brother was an accomplished liar.

But she said:

"Well, I will bring you the money for them soon, for I can get it from father I think, so you must have them where you can get them at once, for, Kent, I would not have anything happen those diamonds mother left me, for my whole fortune."

"Oh, they are all safe, sis, so don't you worry," and Kent choked almost as he thought of how he was deceiving the trusting sister who had made such a sacrifice for him.

"Well, brother, will you go to the opera with me to night?"

"I have secured a box, Jule, and will ask one of my club friends to escort you, for unfortunately, not knowing of your coming, I made a previous engagement."

"Can you not break it for me, brother?"

"No, for it is an engagement to take a lady to the opera, a stranger in the city."

"The fair Mexican heiress you saved from being dashed to death in the Park, eh?"

"Well, yes, it is Señorita Estevan."

"I will have an opportunity then of seeing this boasted beauty?"

"Yes, but our boxes are on the opposite side; but if you wish, I will come and take you to the box of Miss Estevan."

"Thank you, but if Miss Estevan wishes to meet your sister, bring her to my box and present her," was the somewhat laughty response.

"If she will come."

"If not, I am content, Kent; but come, let us take a walk down Broadway, for I wish to get me several little things I need."

They went out together, and as they passed the club the young bloods in the window, none of whom happened to know Jule—for Judge Cassidy had lived in Baltimore before his business caused him to move to New York and purchase Stone Vale—were astonished to see Kent Cassidy walking with another beautiful girl, when they considered him over head and ears in love with the Mexican heiress.

As they strolled leisurely along, Jule attracting universal attention by her beauty and stylish appearance, her face flushed, then paled, and she grasped the arm of her brother eagerly and said:

"Kent! Kent! who is that gentleman coming?"

Kent Cassidy glanced at several gentlemen, but ere he could reply to ask which one, Jule stopped and extending her hand to a tall, magnificent-looking man, said:

"Pardon me, sir, but as I owe my life to you, it is my excuse for stopping to address you."

"I am Miss Cassidy, whom you dragged out of the Hudson River one day."



The stranger stopped, his face flushed, and he raised his hat, while Kent Cassidy bowed and said:

"How do you do, Señor Del Monte?"

"My sister seems to know you."

"Kent, this is the gentleman to whom I owe my life, the day my horse went over the cliff with me, and as he refused then to give me his name, I have never been able to have you and father thank him."

"God knows I thank you now, Del Monte, and I am glad that Jule has run you to earth," and Kent Cassidy spoke fervently and held forth his hand, which Del Monte grasped, while he said with a smile:

"Murder will out, Miss Cassidy, as you see by my being caught."

"But it gives me pleasure to feel that I was able to serve you, and as I am to become a New Yorker, as it were, I hope that we will meet again."

"You have purchased the handsome estate of Cedar Hall, the Lonsdale property, I understand?"

"Yes, Mr. Cassidy, and I shall make my home there."

"Will you not join us in our walk, for we will be glad to have you?" asked Kent.

"Yes, we are going out a short way and then return," urged Jule.

"I was going to the academy to see if I could secure a box for the opera to-night, as I am most fond of music, and I would be happy to place it at the disposal of yourself and sister, Mr. Cassidy, if not otherwise engaged for the evening, for I will be alone and have no friends here," said Del Monte, as he turned and walked slowly along with the brother and sister.

"The very thing, Del Monte, only I have a box, and you must return and dine with us at my rooms, and then I will ask you to accompany my sister."

And Kent Cassidy explained the circumstances of Jule's coming, and added, as Del Monte accepted:

"And I will be there with one of your countrywomen, a Señorita Queena Estevan, about whom I would like to ask you."

"I accept with pleasure," said Del Monte, and thus it was arranged by the innocent strategy of Jule, who had at last met the truant rescuer of her life.

#### CHAPTER XLI.

##### CONDEMNED BY THE DEAD.

THAT the men on board the Owl were alarmed when they saw the yacht gaining upon them was certain; but do all that that they could they were unable to keep the fleet craft in their wake from creeping up closer and closer.

As they went through the narrows and got under the shelter of the land where the breeze did not strike them fairly the yacht gained rapidly; but when the Owl ran out to where she again had her sails drawing well, she pulled away swiftly.

But the yacht soon got the wind again, and as before began to overhaul the Owl, which there was now no doubt as to her being in chase of.

Two of the crew of the sloop had often before sailed in her, and knowing her remarkable speed they were amazed to see another vessel gaining upon her as did the yacht.

As they stretched off toward the Hook the two vessels were not a hundred yards apart and the yacht was still gaining.

"I'll tell you how it is, mates; we are bound to be caught, and we'll simply say we was racing with the yacht for fun."

"We is honest traders, and they can't make nothing else out of it," said Skipper Brick Benson.

"How about that freight we has below, cap'n?" asked one.

"Lordy! the body in ther bar'l?"

"Yes."

"We'll have to throw it overboard."

"They'll see us, and thar'll be a dead giveaway."

"Well, I reckon they won't think it's anything, so we'll lay to risk their finding it out," said Captain Brick.

In half an hour more, just as the sloop began to rise and fall upon the ocean swell, which she had glided into, the yacht ran closer, and a stern voice hailed:

"Ahoy that sloop!"

"Ay, ay, cap'n," answered Brick Benson, in as indifferent a tone as he could command.

"Lay to, for we wish to board you!"

"You hain't got no right to bring an honest craft to at night in New York waters," returned Benson.

"I have a right to bring a dishonest craft to, and I order you to run up into the wind, or I'll fire on you."

"The jig's up, mates! I'll come to and trust to our honest looks," whispered Benson, and he brought the sloop to.

A boat was launched from the yacht, which came to within easy pistol-range, and proved to be a most beautiful craft, and a party soon boarded the sloop, a tall, bearded man at their head.

"What sloop is this?" he asked sternly.

"The Turtle Dove," said Benson innocently.

"Who commands her?"

"I do."

"Your name?"

"Ben Benson."

"Where are you bound?"

"To Rockaway after oysters."

"You have no freight on board?"

"Not a pound, for we is goin' oysterin'."

"Are these men all there are on board?"

"Yes, sir."

"My man, this boat is the Owl, and you are a set of harbor pirates, as you know, and you are my prisoners."

"Men, two of you put irons on these scamps, and the other two take your lanterns and search the craft from hold to cabin."

Brick Benson and his four men wilted.

They saw that the man who boarded them had brought four others with him, while on the yacht were half a dozen more and they were armed with rifles.

"You kin take us, but you'll find we is honest men, so will have to let us go."

"But who are you anyhow?" asked Benson, plucking up courage, as he hoped the ghastly contents of the barrel would not be discovered.

"I am known as Frank Ferret, a detective chief," was the quiet response of the tall man with the gray beard and hair.

"Oh, Lord!" groaned Benson, who, with his crew, were now securely ironed.

The men who were searching the sloop now returned on deck and reported finding nothing.

"Are there no boxes of freight, or anything that is suspicious?"

"There are some few old boxes, chief, and a barrel in the hold."

"What do they contain?"

"The boxes are empty, but the barrel has something in it."

"Doubtless some stolen property."

"Find out what is in it."

The Water Wolves groaned, and soon a cry of surprise came up from below, and a man called out:

"Please come below here, chief."

The detective obeyed, and the head of the barrel having been knocked in, he saw a human body within, all cramped up 'o be made to fit into the close quarters.

"I expected we would find something to condemn those scamps."

"Pull the body out, boys."

The chief's orders were obeyed, and flashing a lantern in the ghastly face, he cried:

"By Heaven! this is the man I struck across the face with my revolver, when he and his pal made their attack upon Miss Cassidy."

"There is the wound I gave him, all patched up, and his face I remember distinctly."

"Can he have died from the blow after all?"

"It seems so, chief, and they were carrying him out to bury him in the sea, for he doubtless belongs to their band," said one of the detectives.

"Well, a *post mortem* will show exactly the cause of his death," replied Chief Ferret, and he gave orders for the sloop to be gotten under way, and the two vessels headed back to the city, while Brick Benson, who was confined in the hold with his companions, said:

"Mates, it's all up with us, I guess, and Kit, dead though he is, may hang us, for we can't tell nothing, after we remember how he died in that iron coffin."

"No, I prefers hanging for a murder I didn't do, than to stand the chances o' dyin' in that iron coffin and brick grave," and his comrades groaned in chorus at the fearful remembrance at the fate of Captain Kit.

#### CHAPTER XLII.

##### ALARM AMONG THE WATER WOLVES.

THE band of Water Wolves were in a quandary.

Brick Benson and his crew with the sloop Owl had mysteriously disappeared.

They had had orders to take the body of Kit, the traitor, out to sea and bury it.

They had been known to sail, but had not returned.

They had gotten from Mistress Betty but a day's rations, so they could not have expected to be gone long.

Yet several days had passed away and they had not returned.

It caused dismay in the camp of the outlaws, and Mistress Betty grew that uneasy that she dressed herself up in her best and went out.

This was a rare, a very rare thing for Mistress Betty to do.

She had always discovered that upon such occasions she lost money.

Whether it was that her presence was the magnet that drew custom or not she could not tell; but she could not be blamed for her vanity in thinking so, for when she was out of the place not a single customer was wont to drop in.

At least, so did Nick report to his mother, and he was backed up in his assertion by both Blonde and Brunette.

Mistress Betty's vanity was flattered, but it was at the sacrifice of shakels for her pocket.

What she suspected she did not make known; but certain it was that whenever she went out for an airing not a dollar would be taken into

the treasury of the Seaman's Paradise, or, at least, not a dollar that she could call her own.

So Mistress Betty was never anxious to go out, and only the greatest reason for doing so, caused her, on this occasion referred to, to don her best clothes and most gorgeous bonnet and depart from the shadows of her den.

Mistress Betty was vain, so she dressed with care, wearing a black satin dress, a silk velvet wrap and a bonnet that looked as though it had drifted against a rainbow and gotten smeared with each color, for it was as gorgeous as colors could make it.

The course taken by Mistress Betty when she left her dive was to a stand where she knew she could hire a hack.

She secured one, bargained with the Jehu for the lowest sum she could get his services for, and gave him a number to drive to which was not a hundred feet from where she lived, only on the street directly back of the one upon which was the Seaman's Paradise, and several shades more respectable in its denizens; in fact the locality was not a bad one, for several "old families" still lingered in the neighborhood.

It looked like one of these old homes, at which the hack containing Mistress Betty Binnacle drew up.

She alighted and rung the bell, having her veil drawn over her face to avoid the curious gaze of any one who had happened to see her on her throne in the Seaman's Paradise.

A servant, solemn-looking as an undertaker, opened the door.

"Is your master in?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Tell him that Mrs. Boniface would speak with him."

The servant ushered her into a pleasant parlor and soon returned with information that:

"Mr. King will see you up-stairs, ma'am, in the sitting-room."

Mistress Betty ascended the stairs and was ushered into a room that held a single occupant.

It was the unknown chief of the Water Wolves, and he came forward to greet her, with the remark:

"Well, Betty, something has gone wrong or you would not be cut in all your war-paint and feathers."

"The sloop's missing, sir," said Betty, sinking into a chair.

"The Owl?"

"Sure."

"Where is she?"

"That's what I'd like to know, sir."

"When was she last seen?"

"She sailed with the cargo of cold meat to dump it in the sea, and she has not been heard from since."

"This was four nights ago?"

"Yes, sir."

"Brick Benson, I made captain?"

"Yes, sir."

"And he chose his own crew, taking four men?"

"Yes, sir, and the best of them, for there was Salvation Sam, Gibbet Tom, Monkey Mike and Card-Sharp Saul, four of our noblest men, chief."

"After such an example as I gave them, they can hardly have turned traitors."

"Not much, sir; but I've got their money in my safe, so they can't have run off."

"No, they have evidently been caught, so I put a hound on the scent to find out when, how, and where they are."

"Call a council for to-night, Betty."

"Yes, sir, I'll do so, for if the poor men are in the jug they must be gotten out, or they'll hang, as there is not one of 'em, chief, but has red hands."

"You are right, and if recognized their record will be looked up and the gallows will yearn for them, and one of them might take a notion to save his neck by telling the truth about the Water Wolves."

"This is a risky life we lead, Mistress Binnacle."

"Indeed it is, sir, and I'm thinking of retiring, seeing as how I have a neat little sum laid by," and Betty took her leave, after indulging in a glass of wine offered by the unknown chief.

Entering the hack, she returned to the stand where she had taken the vehicle, dismissed the man and walked home to obey the orders of the chief and call a council for the night, to discover what had become of Captain Brick Benson and his men.

#### CHAPTER XLIII.

##### THE FORGERY.

WHEN Kent Cassidy went on his way, after having been robbed by the tramp, he was in a mood so reckless that it almost amounted to desperation.

He thought of everything possible by which he could get the money to protect his checks, and at last an idea struck him which caused him to bring his whip down upon his off horse with a sharpness that made the animal nearly spring out of his harness.



"I have it," he cried, as the horses fairly flew along over the road to the city.

It was late when he arrived, but he hastily made a toilet and went to his favorite resort—the club.

As he had hoped, he found there an older member of the club, and one whom he knew to have plenty of money at his command, as he was the president of the bank in which he deposited his account, when he cared to make his payments in checks instead of cash.

"Mr. Secor, I have just come from a long ride, having been out home to see the governor, so am thirsty."

"Won't you join me in a bottle of champagne?"

"Yes, Cassidy, for I was about to order half a bottle before going home," replied Mr. Secor, readily.

The wine was ordered, and after some little conversation Kent Cassidy said:

"By the way, Mr. Secor, where can I discount a note for fifteen thousand dollars, for I have never done such a thing, and do not exactly understand where to get it done, and I have been making some purchases of late and have about swamped my ready cash, until my income comes in."

"Whose note is it, Cassidy?"

"My own, sir."

"For what time?"

"Sixty days."

"For how much, did you say?"

"Fifteen thousand."

"If you will get your father to indorse it for you and bring it to the bank I will give you the money on it."

"Thank you, sir; but the governor would not like a note to go on the street that had his name on it."

"I will hold it and say nothing about it."

"Very well, sir, I will bring it in to-morrow," and the two parted.

But the next morning Kent Cassidy sought the parties holding his checks, asked them not to present them until afternoon, as he had failed to make a deposit the day before, and then he hastened to the bank.

Mr. Secor was there, glanced at the note handed to him, and called to the cashier to cash it.

Depositing all but a few hundred, Kent Cassidy left the bank, a feeling of relief in his mind, but with a shadow on his heart.

"I have committed a crime, that is sure, but I was driven to it by the heartlessness of my father, who would allow me no money," he said, blaming his noble old father for his sins of extravagance and recklessness.

"I must arrange to take that note up; but I have sixty days to do it in."

"Secor does not know father, so I have nothing to fear."

"But about those diamonds?"

"I must get those for Jule, or there will be trouble, for father will find it out."

After a long meditation, an idea struck Kent Cassidy to seek the aid of a detective in finding the diamonds.

"Ferret saved Jule from those tramps, so I will seek him," he said, and at once wended his way to the quarters of the detective chief.

After a short wait he was ushered into the private office of the chief, whom he had called on after Jule's adventures with the grave ghouls, to thank him for his kindness to his sister, and so the chief recognized him and greeted him pleasantly.

"How can I serve you, Mr. Cassidy?" he asked.

"The truth is, Chief Ferret, I am in trouble, for my sister gave me a lot of jewels to have reset, and their value is fully thirty thousand dollars, many of them being heirlooms from my grandmother."

"I was bringing them to the city, when on the highway I was attacked by tramps, and they robbed me of the velvet sachel in which was the jewelry."

"Now, I do not wish my sister or my father to hear of this, so I come to you to ask your aid, and I will give what reward you deem right for their restoration to me."

"I will undertake the work, sir."

And the chief wrote down some notes on a slip of paper, asking questions the while of his visitor.

"I feel easier now," muttered Kent Cassidy, as he left the quarters of the detective, and soon after he reached the club and sat down to read his mail.

There was one letter there that read as follows:

"MY DEAR CASSIDY:—I am called to Europe unexpectedly, so hasten for the steamer that sails at noon, having just time to catch it, and I have a favor to ask of you."

"It is that you receive for me, from a gentleman who wishes to purchase a plot of land, the sum of twenty thousand dollars, which he is to pay me for the purchase of a plot of land."

"He may pay you by check, and if so hold it for me, and if by cash, deposit with your bank account, so you can hand me check on my return, which may not be for a couple of months."

"Yours ever,

"VASSAR BELL."

Vassar Bell was one of the richest young men in the club, and he had always shown a liking for Kent Cassidy.

As Kent was supposed to be the richest man in the club, he never did aught to destroy that illusion by borrowing a dollar from any member, and hence kept up his credit.

"This is a godsend," he said, as he read the letter, and he made it a point to be in when Mr. Adam Brady called.

He showed his letter, treated Mr. Brady to a bottle of wine, took him over the club, and received the money in new, crisp bills of large denomination.

The next day he went down with the money to the Secor Bank to take up that note, for the name of his father as the indorser, a name which he had forged, worried him more than he cared to admit.

"If father were to find that out, he would never forgive me, and not a dollar of his money would I ever get," he said, as he skipped into the bank in a happy mood, at being able to take up and destroy the evidence of his guilt.

Mr. Secor was not there, so he asked the cashier for the note.

"It was taken up yesterday, you remember, sir."

"Taken up yesterday?"

The words dropped like pebbles from his mouth.

"Yes, sir, I supposed that you sent for it, as the party asked for it, paid the money and took it."

"Ah, yes, my father took it up," said Kent Cassidy with a forced laugh.

But he went out of the bank with a pallid face and throbbing heart, for he knew not what to dread.

#### CHAPTER XLIV.

##### THE WATER WOLF'S STORY.

MISTRESS BETTY BINNACLE was more than anxious to get the band of Water Wolves together for an "extra session," for she was growing really nervous about the mysterious disappearance of Captain Brick Benson and his crew.

So she let each one of the "faithful," as she called the members of the gang, know that their presence was needed that night in the underground chamber.

There was no other way of reaching the place except by the aid of Mistress Betty, or through the secret passage by which the unknown chief entered, for the landlady of the Seamen's Paradise was determined there should be no mistake.

No one could enter there unless Mistress Betty let him in through the secret way in the wall, and she took good care to see the face of each man who entered, so that no spy could possibly get in.

At the proper time she took her stand at the tunnel-like hall, and as the members of the band arrived she let them in.

Then Mistress Betty admonished her son and the two girls to be square with all change that might come in, and she entered the Dungeon, for she was a member in good standing, and was of course entitled to a voice in the council.

Rats took his stand at the secret door in the wall, and then all was ready for business.

All were on the *qui vive* to know the cause of the call on an off-night, and it was whispered around that something of great importance was on hand, for the landlady had not made known what she knew about the five members of the band being missing, and along with them the Owl, the pride of the Water Wolves.

The men, however, were awed in that chamber, and the whispering soon died away and a dread silence followed, as they waited for the coming of their unknown chief.

The remembrance that their comrade, Captain Kit, had met his doom there some time before caused the men an extra feeling of awe and dread.

At last the sable curtains were drawn aside and the unknown chief appeared.

Those there assembled arose, and the usual ceremony was gone through with.

Then the deep voice of the chief broke the silence:

"Let Captain Brick Benson come before me!"

There was no movement among the men, and no one walked to the front.

"Not present; then let any one of his crew come before me."

Still no one came.

"Can any one present account for the absence of Captain Brick Benson and his crew?"

No one answered.

"Has any one seen either the skipper or his men during the past four days?"

No response.

"Has any one seen the ship at her anchorage or in the harbor?"

Still no reply.

All now felt that something was surely wrong.

All remembered the treachery of Captain Kit and Buster, and they looked one at the other suspiciously.

Then the silence was broken by Rats calling out that there was a knock at the outer door.

He was ordered to see who was there, and in a few minutes he returned accompanied by one of the band who had been sent on a special duty by the chief.

"Back again, Fonda?" said the chief, recognizing the man as he came forward.

"Yes, chief, and I have an important report to make," said the man, who was a slender, wiry fellow, with more the look of a young clergyman than a scoundrel.

"Is it a public, or private report?"

"Public, chief, for I failed in my undertaking, was caught and sent to prison."

"While there, four days ago, Captain Brick Benson and his crew were brought in."

A murmur ran around the room.

"Go on," calmly said the chief.

"I saw them brought by my cell door by night, and they were in double irons."

"I overheard two of the watch talking about them the next day and they said the sloop had been watched by detectives in a yacht, some of that new Secret Service chief's band, which they call Ferret, and they had followed Captain Brick into the lower harbor and caught his craft."

"A search had revealed the body of Kit in the barrel, and a *post mortem* examination showed that he had died by suffocation."

"Captain Benson and his men were accordingly held for murder, and will be tried for the killing of Kit, whom it seems Ferret the detective chief recognized as the man he hit across the face at the grave of Colonel Lonsdale, when he killed Buster."

"And you, Fonda?" calmly asked the unknown chief, while his men moved uneasily in their seats.

"I happened to have considerable money in my clothes, and I paid one of the guards to come with me to Mistress Betty's, where I told him I lived, to get my clothes, and he is now waiting outside, so I must go back; only don't let me go to Sing Sing, chief, and Kit and his boys swing for murder, I beg of you."

"I'll see that you are taken care of, Fonda, so now return to your guard, so as not to cause suspicion."

The man saluted and hastily retired, Mistress Betty following him out.

In a short while she returned and reported that Fonda had secured his clothes and had gone back with the guard.

"Men, you have heard what has been said, so keep near our quarters here by day and night, and be ready to move, if I need you."

"Mistress Betty will advise you when I need your services," and the unknown chief dismissed the band; but it was evident to them all that he had some plan of action to save their comrades, and they had confidence in his ability to carry out any plot his daring might contemplate.

But still the Water Wolves felt uneasy, for a traitor held them at his mercy, should one of those in prison decide to be treacherous.

#### CHAPTER XLV.

##### A MYSTERY SOLVED.

CHIEF FERRET had a visit one morning from a veiled lady, and so thick was her veil that not a feature of her face could be seen through it.

She was very plainly dressed, and when ushered into his private office she had told him that she wished to discover a few facts regarding her husband.

"Your name, please?" asked the chief.

"Is it necessary to tell you?" was the low query.

The chief smiled and said:

"How can I learn facts, madam, without knowing who it is I am to shadow?"

"True, sir; I am Mrs. Grayson Glyndon, and you may have heard of my husband."

"Yes, madam, I know of him; what is it you desire to know regarding him?"

"When I married him, I believed myself very rich, for my father, the late Colonel Lonsdale, led me to believe that he was several times a millionaire."

"I married Mr. Glyndon because my father wished me to do so, and I felt kindly toward him for saving my life, and also admired and respected him."

"Mr. Glyndon led my father to believe, and also myself, that he was a very wealthy man."

"Now it transpires that the fortune left by my father had been dissipated, and that I live in an old-fashioned house with a few dollars in cash, his estate of Cedar Hall having been sold for the benefit of the brother."

"Where is your brother now, madam?"

"That I do not know, and would to heaven I did."

"Has it been long since you heard from him?"

"Oh, yes, many years."

"Then he may be dead?"

"Oh, no, I cannot believe that."

"Why did he leave you?"

"Well, he disappeared one night, and under



circumstances that cast a cloud upon him; but I am sure he did no wrong.

"Only, poor fellow, it looked so, and in fact he left a letter for my father which it was said acknowledged a wrong.

"My father never spoke of him afterward, and dying, as I believed, utterly cut him off; but I am happy to say that he added a codicil to his will which gave the money from the sale of Cedar Hall to my brother, should he return within a certain time, and if not, it was to go to an object of charity.

"Now, as it stands, I am comparatively poor, and wish to sell my home and retire to humble quarters, for, with what I have, and the place will bring, we will have an income of several hundreds a month to live on.

"But my husband will not give up the place, and lives in the same style as before, while he says he has lost his fortune through investment in mining-stocks.

"Here is a slip of what he claimed to be worth, when we were married, with the mines and all, and I desire to have you ascertain if he ever had any property, as he says, if he has any legal practice now, and how it is he gets the large sums of money which I know he handles.

"Can you do this for me, Mr. Ferret?"

"I think so, madam."

"Will it take long?"

"Only a week, I think."

"Shall I call then?"

"Yes, if you will."

"And your charge?"

"Pay me when I have discovered what you seek to know, madam."

Ruth bowed and departed, and that night when Grayson Glyndon came home to dinner, she asked him, as the two sat together after the meal was over:

"Grayson, why will you not let me sell this house, and put the money at interest, for it will give us a handsome income?"

"Not what we need."

"It is worth a hundred thousand, the furniture and paintings will bring twenty, my diamonds ten thousand, and you know I have as much in Mr. Lockwood's hands, and there are the carriages and horses.

"In fact, we can buy a snug little home out of town, and we will have fully ten thousand a year to live on, and that is ample."

"We are now living upon ten thousand a month, I guess."

"Yes, and with no foundation for doing so, since I know what my inheritance is."

"Well, wait a few months and then I will decide what is best."

"And what will we do in that time?"

"Leave that to me."

"But we will squander what we have got for appearance's sake, for you said all you had has gone."

"So it has; but just to trust me for a few months yet, and if matters go right, why we'll keep our home and our luxurious style of living too."

"Grayson, I will give you just one month, no longer, and then I will not submit to deception, if we have nothing to live on."

"Call it two months."

"No, one month, and for that I have the money in Mr. Ingersoll Lockwood's hands to pay."

"After that, I shall sell what I possess, and not live like a millionaire on a few hundreds a month," and Ruth swept toward the door, while her husband called after her:

"Well, Ruth, we'll live to our full bent for luxury up to the end of the month."

Ruth made no reply, but went to her room, and at the end of the week she appeared at the office of Ferret the detective.

"Well, Mr. Ferret, have you made any discoveries?"

"I have discovered, Mrs. Glyndon, that your husband had a few thousands when he married you, and that his stocks were in wildcat companies that had failed.

"He has no law practice to speak of, and the money he gets in such large sums can only be procured in one way."

"By gambling of course, sir?"

The chief bowed.

For a moment Ruth could not speak; but with an effort at self-control, she said:

"I thank you, sir."

"Your charge, please?"

"My dear madam, in seeking information for you I struck a missing link in a chain of evidence that I was welding, and it will pay me so handsomely, I will make no charge whatever to you."

"But, sir, I—"

"Do not insist, please, madam, for I am more than repaid, I assure you, by what I discovered through your putting me on the track of your husband, as it led to my tracing another person I could get no clew of before."

"So let us call the bill quits."

"As you please, Mr. Ferret, but I fear I can never ask your services again."

"I pray you do so, for then I will charge as exorbitantly as you desire," was the reply of the chief, as he bowed his beautiful client to the door.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

### THE PLOT WORKS WELL.

THE home of Queena Estevan, the pretended Mexican heiress, was certainly a most delightful one.

The house was small, but cosy, and the furniture was of the best, while it quickly put on a homelike air that was very inviting.

Queen, whatever her sins might be, was a good housekeeper, and "Aunt Phoebe" took great pleasure in looking after affairs, for other than a few duties, she had nothing to do but enjoy life.

The butler served the meals to perfection, the cook was an excellent one, and the coachman kept the horses and equipages in the very best condition.

Kent Cassidy had become a daily visitor at the home, and both Aunt Phoebe and Queena had begged him to take pity on them and not permit them to drive alone, when he could be present.

From sending the beautiful woman flowers, Kent took to making her presents, beginning with little souvenirs, and then sending her *brace-à-brac* and jewelry that cost him a good round sum.

His forged note having been taken up, it left him with the twenty thousand of his friend, and he was not slow in spending what he wished of it, recklessly trusting to luck to replace it in some way when needed.

He ascertained that his father had not been in town when the forged note was taken up, so concluded that it must be some mistake of the bank's, and so let it rest until he heard of it again.

The more he saw of Queena Estevan, the more he became infatuated with her, and he began to feel that she really cared for him.

She showed it in a number of little ways, while Aunt Phoebe always gave him a hearty welcome, so hearty in fact that he felt he would have no trouble with her, as far as her consent was concerned.

"Is Miss Phoebe your guardian, Miss Queena?" he asked one day, as they sat alone in the parlor together.

"Oh, no."

"Who is, then?"

"I have no guardian."

"Do you mean that you are your own guardian?"

"Wholly so."

"And your parents are dead, you said?"

"Both of them."

"And they left you to your own guardian-ship?"

"Yes."

"What confidence they must have had in you."

"They had; but then, you know, I have an agent."

"I have heard you refer to your agent several times, so who is he?"

"A gentleman who has charge of my estate, collects money due me, pays my bills and all that, you know, which my husband will have to do, if I get one."

"You have only to hint that you would rather have a husband than an agent to find as many as you wish."

"Good husbands, like good agents, are not readily found; but my agent is a treasure."

"I wish I was your—"

"Agent?"

"Yes, in one sense of the word."

"I think you would make a good one, for, with large property yourself, you certainly could manage another fortune."

"I am glad you have that confidence in me."

"I have heard that you were vastly wealthy, Mr. Cassidy."

"Yes, my father is a very rich man, and of course I am his heir, while, in a manner, I have the management of his fortune now," and Kent Cassidy coughed, for the lie he had told very nearly choked him.

And thus they talked on, until at last the man, though he had known the temptress so short a while, was led to confess his love, and left the house that night with the promise that she would become his wife.

Hardly had he gone when a cab drove up to the door and a man alighted therefrom.

It was the "agent"—none other than the man she called King, and who was the unknown chief of the Water Wolves.

His own pass-key admitted him, and having heard his carriage stop before the house, the woman met him in the hall and the two entered the cosy little library together.

"Well, Queen—"

"Queen, please, King," corrected the woman.

"Ah, yes, Señorita Estevan, I forgot; but I came up to say that money matters are getting a little cramped with me."

"Well?"

"Renting this home, furnishing it, getting you a stable outfit and all that, ran up to over ten thousand dollars, and I assure you that the Water Wolves have to keep in their den just now, as our sloop has been captured and her crew is being held in jail."

"No!"

"It is true, and for these reasons I hope you will just hasten matters a little."

"You mean with Mr. Cassidy?"

"Yes."

"You are anxious to have him engaged to me?"

"More, I am anxious to have you his wife."

"Then there will be no trouble, you think, as to his property?"

"Not a bit."

"Explain fully, King."

"You know, as I told you, that his father's will, leaving him full power, has not been changed?"

"Yes."

"His father is said to have heart disease, and a sudden shock might carry him off; but if not, there are things that will, for he is nearing seventy."

"I see."

"That leaves Cassidy, your lover, in complete control."

"Yes."

"And the estate is worth half a dozen millions."

"Well?"

"Then it is very easy to get rid of Cassidy in some way, and you have the fortune."

"He has a sister."

"You can get him to settle a sum on her, after you marry him."

"I understand."

"Now you have done well, and fortune has favored us, for that runaway affair could not have been more fortunate, and the town has it that he is wildly in love with you."

"So he has told me."

"Hah! has he told you he loved you?" eagerly asked the man.

"Yes."

"When?"

"To-night."

"And asked you to be his wife?"

"Yes."

"And when does he wish you to marry him?"

"Whenever I am willing."

"Good!"

"But he seems to dread making it known to his father, as he says his father does not exactly know who I am."

"That is true."

"He wishes to break it first to his father, have him meet me, then ask his consent to our engagement, and in about six months request his consent to marry me."

"Six months!"

"No, six months."

"I cannot wait."

"What will you do?"

"Have you marry him at once."

"His father might cut him off, you know."

"Your head is right there, Queen."

"Queen."

"Oh, yes, Queen."

"It would not do to have him disinherited, and he says his father is a very determined man."

"No, it would thwart all; but I'll tell you what can be done."

"Yes?"

"Marry him secretly."

"Ah!"

"Yes, marry him secretly, and then his father might die, and afterward, you know a public wedding could be held."

"You know best, King."

"Of course I do, and it shall be that way."

"When shall I marry him?"

"Oh, whenever you wish, for I don't care, so that you are able to show your certificate."

"And then?"

"Leave all to me, and you will be the richest woman in New York in a very short while."

"And you?"

"I will manage your estate, give up this life of peril I lead, and watch over the beautiful widow."

"Widow?"

"Yes."

"How do you mean?"

"Why of course Cassidy will die soon after his father, and leave you a widow; but now I must be off."

And thus they parted.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

### AT THE OPERA.

WE will now return to the night of the opera, when Jule Cassidy had obtained as her escort the Mexican gentleman, Don Marco Del Monte, who had saved her life, and whose dark, handsome face had seemed to haunt her, ever since he had parted with her at the shore of Stone Vale.

After waiting to the door with Jule and her brother, Del Monte excused himself to go home and dress for the opera, and calling a hack drove away.

Within an hour he had returned, and it was a pleasant little dinner the three had together in Kent Cassidy's cheerful rooms.

The sister and brother found the Mexican a most charming personage, and he entertained



them with many stories and anecdotes of his wanderings, for he had been an extensive traveler in many lands.

As he had to go after Queena Estevan to take her to the opera, Kent was forced to leave early, and excused himself, while Jule went to get ready to also go, Del Monte enjoying meanwhile his coffee and cigar.

When Jule entered the room, a scarf thrown over her head and about her neck, Del Monte was forced to admit that he had never seen a more lovely woman, and together they made a superb-looking couple.

As they entered the Academy and passed to their box, they were the cynosure of all eyes, and every glass in the house was turned upon first one then the other.

But they looked wholly unconcerned, and there were few in the house who knew either Jule or Del Monte.

A few moments after their entrance the box adjoining theirs also received occupants.

They were Ruth Glyndon and her husband, and they, too, were a couple of striking appearance.

As Ruth sat down her eyes suddenly met those of Del Monte, and her face flushed and then paled, for he brought back to her the remembrance of Douglas Drew.

But she smiled and bowed, remembering his kindness when she had met him at Cedar Hall.

Grayson Glyndon bit his lips, as though vexed, when he saw Del Monte, for he too recalled Douglas Drew, the young soldier who he felt assured held his wife's love; but he bowed pleasantly.

"Who is the beautiful lady with the Señor Del Monte, Grayson?" asked Ruth.

"It is Miss Julia Cassidy, a daughter of that wealthy judge who bought Stone Vale and whom I spoke to you of."

And he bowed to Jule.

Just then into the box opposite came two persons.

They were Kent Cassidy and Queena Estevan.

Jule was fairly dying with curiosity to turn her glass upon the woman whose life her brother had saved, but she contented herself with a glance, and the remark:

"She is very beautiful, Señor Del Monte."

"She is a remarkably handsome woman, one to dread rather than love," was the response.

"You seem uncomplimentary to your countrywoman, señor."

"No, I merely spoke as she impressed me."

"I should like to meet her, and, when some of your friends visit you, I will take the opportunity of going to your brother's box, as he invited me."

"Do so, and tell me just what you think of her, for I am anxious to know, believing you to be a good reader of human nature."

"You are kind to say so; but I believe I am a good face reader, without flattering myself in saying so."

"Brother asked me to waive ceremony and go to Miss Estevan's box."

"And your answer?"

"That Miss Estevan was welcome to come here."

"Rightly said, Miss Cassidy, and— But I will tell you more when I know Miss Estevan."

The curtain now went up, and all eyes were upon the stage, though Jule managed to steal half a dozen good looks through her *lorgnette* upon the Mexican beauty.

"Whoever saw three more beautiful women?" asked a club man over in the circle, referring to Jule, Ruth and Queena Estevan.

And this seemed to be the prevailing opinion of all in the house.

To the surprise and delight of Jule, her father came to the box, having returned from out of town, and going to pass the evening with his son heard that he and his sister were at the opera.

Jule presented Del Monte, telling her father who he was, and how she had met him, while with her brother, and recognized him as the one to whom she owed her life.

The voice of the old judge trembled as he grasped Del Monte's hand and said:

"God bless you, sir! for in saving my daughter's life you saved mine, as I could never have recovered from the shock."

Excusing himself for a few moments Del Monte left the box, while the judge said:

"Jule, that man possesses a noble face, a face rarely met with, and I am proud to call him friend."

Jule was delighted at this praise from her father, who regarded half the men in society as cockroaches and soulless, and her eyes followed Del Monte as he went to the box of her brother, who at once presented him to his beautiful companion, while he came around to see his father and sister.

Visiting was now in order, and the boxes were soon filled with young society men, excepting the one in which sat Queena Estevan, for Kent Cassidy, in his jealousy, had not encouraged any of his friends in calling upon the Mexican beauty.

When presented to the Señorita Estevan, Del

Monte, as soon as Kent departed, addressed her in Spanish, saying in his graceful way:

"Let us speak in our own tongue, señorita, to recall to us our home of beautiful, sunny Mexico."

Queena replied with a light laugh, and they were carrying on quite a pleasant conversation when Kent Cassidy came back, accompanied by Grayson Glyndon, whom he presented with the laughing remark:

"Mr. Glyndon is married, Señorita Estevan."

"Señor Del Monte is not," was the quick reply.

"No, I have not been so fortunate," he said, and bowed his way out, returning to his own box.

During the next "between the acts," Del Monte went into the adjoining box and was welcomed by Ruth and her husband, and the former said:

"Señor Del Monte, I think Miss Cassidy perfectly lovely, and I would so like to meet her."

"May I ask that you and Mr. Glyndon join Miss Cassidy, her father and herself at supper with me at Del Monte's after the opera?"

"With pleasure, if Mr. Glyndon is willing."

Grayson Glyndon assented, but he did not seem to exactly like the arrangement.

Returning to his box Del Monte said:

"Miss Cassidy, as Mrs. Glyndon made the same remark of you that you did of her, and also expressed the same desire to meet you, I asked her and her husband to join your father and yourself at supper with me after the opera."

"I shall be delighted," said Jule; but she wondered why Del Monte had not asked her brother and Miss Estevan.

Thus came together several of the actors in this romance of real life.

#### CHAPTER XLVIII.

##### A MADMAN'S SECRET.

GRAYSON GLYNDON was not wholly satisfied that the lost fortune of Colonel Lonsdale could be found.

He was well aware that a vast sum, in bonds, jewels and money, had been put out of the way somehow, and if found his wife would be enormously wealthy, while, without finding the treasure, she would keep her word and give up her home and life of luxury when the month had gone by which she had set as the limit to live under false pretenses.

Down to Lawyer Ingersoll Lockwood went Grayson Glyndon, to hold a conversation with him upon an idea that had suggested itself to him.

Mr. Lockwood greeted him pleasantly, and Glyndon asked:

"Mr. Lockwood, that will leaves what is lost wholly to my wife, does it not?"

"Yes, all except the money that went to pay the debts and the estate of Cedar Hall."

"You have thought of no clew?"

"Nothing."

"Do you recall that Colonel Lonsdale's most confidential servant went crazy?"

"Yes, sir."

"It was just after the colonel's death?"

"Yes, and it was said he went mad on account of what he saw in the house one night, for he slept there in charge."

"So it was, and I have an idea that Patsey Belt—for such is his name—could tell me about that missing treasure."

"He might be able to do so, for certainly no one else can."

"Did you question old Thurber and his wife?"

"I did, and they knew nothing, but said if any one could tell it would be Patsey Belt."

"Suppose I go to the Asylum and see him?"

"It would be a good idea."

"I might learn something from him, even in his incoherent talk."

"It can do no harm, and I will give you a note to the medical attendant asking that you might see him."

Armed with this letter Grayson Glyndon took the train for the town where the Asylum was situated, in which was Patsey Belt, the mad servant who had so long and faithfully served Colonel Lonsdale.

Arriving at the Asylum Grayson Glyndon was allowed to go to the room of the unfortunate man.

He sat by the open window, gazing out over the green fields, and listening to the singing of the birds that hopped about in the trees near his grated window.

He was a large, powerful man, with a good face, but one that was not very strong, his fine physique having been formed at the expense of his brain power.

He looked up as the doctor entered, with Grayson Glyndon, and as he caught sight of the latter he cried, as he shrunk away:

"Are you a ghost?"

"No, Patsey, I am your old friend, Mr. Glyndon, who married Miss Ruth, you remember, and I came up here to see you."

"How are you, Patsey?"

He held out his hand as he spoke, but Patsey Belt shrunk from him, while he said in a low tone:

"You remind me of a ghost."

"No, no, Patsey, don't be foolish. I am your friend."

"Don't you remember me?"

"Mr. Glyndon?"

"Yes."

"You saved the colonel and Miss Ruth on the burning steamer."

"Yes."

"Better have let them burn up."

"Ah, Patsey!"

"Yes, it would have been better for them."

"I married Miss Ruth, you know?"

"Yes, I know."

"And your master left you enough money to take care of you."

"Yes, in a mad-house."

"You must get well, Patsey, and come out and be my valet."

"No, rather stay here."

"Don't you wish to see Miss Ruth?"

"Yes, poor Miss Ruth."

"She is well and happy, Patsey."

He shook his head sadly.

"Patsey!"

"Yes."

"What did your master do with his jewels, his bonds and money he had in a large leather case?"

The man started.

"Don't you remember such a leather case?"

"Yes."

"What was in it?"

"Bonds, some precious stones and some bank-bills."

"Yes, and where did he keep it?"

"In the safe."

"Who had the key?"

"Colonel Lonsdale."

"No one else?"

"No."

"Who got the key after the colonel died?"

"Lawyer Lockwood."

"The leather case was not found in the safe, Patsey?"

"It was not?"

"No."

"Where was it?"

"Don't know."

"Do you know what the amount was in the leather case?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"A million dollars in bonds."

"What?"

"A million dollars in bonds."

"And what else?"

"Jewels worth half a million."

"And what else?"

"A hundred thousand dollars in bank-bills."

"Yes, and anything else?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"Mortgages, due in three years for a million dollars."

"This amounts to about two and a half millions?"

"Yes."

"Anything else?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"His place of Cedar Hall, property in town, bank account and—"

"But all this we know about; but we cannot find the leather case."

"It is lost."

"So I know."

"The colonel got me to add up all his property one night."

"Yes."

"That was all."

"But the bonds and other things?"

"Maybe he took them with him."

"Nonsense! he is dead."

"Where is Master Lionel?"

"Dead, these long years."

"Dead?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"Word came to me that he was dead."

"Poor boy."

"Yes."

"Then Miss Ruth will get all."

"She has all but the property that was in the leather case."

"She can get that now."

"How?"

"Master Lionel is dead."

"Yes."

"Give it to Miss Ruth, then."

"But where is it?"

"In the safe."

"What safe?"

"The coffin!"

Grayson Glyndon turned livid.

The mystery was about to be solved, and his voice quivered as he asked:

"So you put it in the colonel's coffin?"

"Yes, for Master Lionel."

Grayson Glyndon could hardly command his voice, while he said:

"Well, Patsey, it was good of you indeed to save that for Master Lionel."

"The colonel made his will and left nothing



for Master Lionel, so I knew what was in the leather case and put it away in the coffin, to tell him when he came back.

"Patsey is no fool; but the ghosts scared me and made me forget."

"It's Miss Ruth's now."

He dropped his head in his hands and said no more, and urging him but caused him to become violent, and Grayson Glyndon and the doctor withdrew, the former hastening home full of joy at having drawn from the madman his secret.

#### CHAPTER XLIX.

##### THE SECRET MARRIAGE.

WHEN Kent Cassidy learned at breakfast the next morning that Del Monte had asked his father and sister, and Grayson Glyndon and his wife to supper with him, and not himself and Queena Estevan, he felt a little slighted, for he thought that it would have been an excellent opportunity for him to have his sister meet the one he loved.

His father had gone around to the box with him and called upon the Señorita Estevan; but he had not remained long, seeming to prefer the company of his daughter and Del Monte.

"I think Del Monte was rude," said Kent, as he sipped his coffee.

"No, my son, for he had no right to bring a young lady who is a stranger, in social contact with Mrs. Glyndon and your sister, with whom she is wholly unacquainted."

"I think he was wise, as he was not inviting us to his home, but merely to supper," said the judge.

"And, brother, I said that I was anxious to meet Mrs. Glyndon, and she happened to make the same remark about me, so Señor Del Monte extended the invitation to her husband and herself to have supper, and we had a charming time, for she is perfectly lovely."

"Well, perhaps I should not blame Del Monte for following the rules of etiquette; but don't you think Queena Estevan is beautiful, sis?"

"Well, she is a very handsome woman, such a beauty as I should think Cleopatra possessed," was the rather doubtful compliment.

"She thought you perfectly lovely, as you women say."

"She was right," quietly said the judge.

"Did you not so think her, father?"

"My son, my life as a judge has caused me to give my opinion in an unbiased way, and I must be frank to say that where Miss Estevan would win ninety-nine out of a hundred men, I would be that one whom she did not sway."

"Why, father, she is irresistible, and very beautiful."

"Beauty is skin-deep; the soul goes deeper, my son."

"Then you did not like her?" and Kent seemed angry.

"I did not admire her, though she is fascinating, I admit, handsome in face, graceful in form, ladylike, and did all in her power to make me like her."

"Father?"

"She wished the father of Kent Cassidy to like her, my son."

"She is enormously rich."

"Riches bring luxuries, my son, not happiness or purity."

"I cannot understand your criticisms of Queena Estevan, father."

"I shall be more explicit then, Kent, and tell you frankly that I hope you are not interested in her, for I do not like her, and she cannot compare with your sister, or that lovely woman, Mrs. Glyndon."

Kent Cassidy bit his lips, for he felt hurt and angry.

But he knew it was no use to argue with his father, whose brilliant arguments before the Bar had gotten him upon the Bench.

It was to his father that he would have to appeal for funds, when he wished to marry, and he had not asked a dollar, over his allowance, for some time, which he hoped was winning him credit in the eyes of the judge, who did not know of the fund from Vassar Bell that his son had to draw upon.

As June and her father were to return home that afternoon, Del Monte had asked them to allow him to have them at Stone Vale in his yacht, for he was going on up to Cedar Hall to see how his workmen were progressing there.

The judge had accepted the invitation for himself and daughter, and Kent had gone down to see them on board, for he was anxious to show his father that Queena Estevan was creating in him a complete reformation.

As soon as the yacht glided pushed off, Kent Cassidy gave a sigh of relief.

Then, as he sprung into his carriage, in which they had driven to the pier, he said:

"The governor will not give his consent, that is certain, so I'll have to marry her secretly, and get her property into my management, so I can help myself out of debt, for my father will do nothing, and I cannot live upon the allowance he gives me."

Then Bell's letter from Halifax, that he found a person on the steamer who could arrange his business in London, and so got the captain to put him on board a pilot-boat, and

after a run of the lakes will return, will force me to get that twenty thousand on hand, for it may be needed at any moment.

"I am in a fix, and if I marry Queena secretly, she will give all of her affairs into my hands to manage, and then I'll save myself and make the governor believe I am leading a life of perfection."

"Once he feels that I have reformed, he will come down handsomely, and if he considers that Queena Estevan is the one who has led me back into the fold, he will be only too glad to have me marry her."

"I'll just tell him to keep a little of my income each month as a nest-egg for me, and this will please him, and convince him how good I am getting, and I'll preach about the advice Queena gives me and all that."

"Now to see if I can urge her into a secret marriage with me."

"If not, I'm in dire distress."

His carriage now drew up at the door of Queena Estevan, and he entered the house and was greeted in the sweetest manner possible.

"Queena," he said as he sat down by her side on the sofa.

"Well, Kent?"

"I am worried."

"What about, Kent?"

"My father has picked out a wife for me."

"No!"

"Yes, he has struck some Quakeress in Philadelphia and insists that she is the very woman to make my wife."

"And what say you?"

"Oh, nonsense! you know what I say."

"The truth is the old man is childish, and I am going to apply to the courts to take charge of his affairs; but I told him I was already married, and I wish you would secretly enter into a marriage ceremony with me."

"Kent!" and the large eyes opened with surprise.

"Once you are my wife, I will let it remain a secret until I can win the old man over, and if not, I'll have the court permit to spring upon him, giving me, according to his will, full control over his estates."

"And you wish me to marry you, Kent?"

"Yes, to-day, to-morrow, as soon as you will."

"Secretly?"

"Oh, yes."

"I can refuse you nothing, Kent, for I love you."

Two days after, with Aunt Phoebe and Jarvis the butler as witnesses, Kent Cassidy and Queena Estevan were made man and wife in the parlor of the little home.

The butler had been paid a snug sum to act as witness and keep the secret—Kent Cassidy had gained his point and was tied to the woman he loved beyond escape, and she, this strange creature, Queena Estevan, had won the stake which the unknown chief of the Water Wolves had urged her to play for.

#### CHAPTER L.

##### WON.

THE Unknown Chief of the Water Wolves was equal to the emergency when Queena married Kent Cassidy.

He did not wish to have his prospects at once ruined by the discovery on the part of Cassidy that Queena was not an heiress, and so he scraped together the results of his thieving transactions and gave them into the hands of the clever woman.

It was a very neat little sum, a fortune, in fact, only to one who was striving for millions, it was but a bagatelle.

Queena had a "business talk" with Kent several days after their marriage, when he called, as was his custom.

In the first place she said:

"Aunt Phoebe has been anxious to return to her home, for she has always been homesick, and I suppose I must let her go soon, for it will not be very long before you can acknowledge me publicly as your wife."

"I hope a very short while, my darling," was the fervent response of Cassidy.

"Now, I wish to speak to you, Kent, upon business matters."

"Well?" he said, eagerly.

"My agent I have had to pay pretty liberally, so I will be glad to dismiss him and transfer my affairs to your hands."

"I will do all that I can to help you, Queena," was the unselfish response.

"I of course have my large interests in Mexico, and my New York agent must go there to settle up matters with my attorneys there, but it will only take a few months, and the funds in his hands here, I got from him to ask you to take charge of."

"There are here some thirty thousand dollars, and you can hold the money for me to give me as I need it for expenses, and before long the bulk of my property shall all be in your keeping, my dear, noble husband."

Kent Cassidy's face beamed with delight.

The thirty thousand would pay Vassar Bell back his money and help him along until he got his clutches upon that vast Mexican property.

He did not ask a question about how much it was, or anything else, showing himself wholly unselfish.

"My father will see in a couple of months that I am a changed man, and he will hand me over a snug sum, I know," he said to himself.

So he counted out the bills, which the Unknown Chief had had such difficulty to raise just then, and the next morning they were in the bank to his credit.

As he returned to the club he met Vassar Bell, and at once wrote him out a check for his twenty thousand.

"This makes me solid with him, should I need a loan of a few thousand," he said to himself.

Having reformed, as he called it, Kent Cassidy went twice a week to Stone Vale and did all in his power to show his father that his life was a most exemplary one.

Incidentally he would remark:

"Father, I have sold my carriage and horses."

"Indeed, my son, you were wise, unless you intend to purchase a more elegant and expensive team."

"No, Miss Estevan said she should think I could get along with my pair of trotters and a saddle-horse, and save the expense of a carriage and horses, with a coachman, in the city."

"I have often said so, my son."

Then it would be:

"Father, Miss Estevan says she thinks I am very extravagant."

"She is not alone in that thought."

"She could not see why I kept a valet, butler, cook and house-girl at my city home, for she said my valet could act as butler, and the cook, where there was but one to serve, should do the housework, and so I discharged two."

"Miss Estevan has a good influence over you, it seems."

"Well, she is very kind in pointing out my faults."

On the next visit it was:

"Father, Miss Estevan says I should give up dining at the club, when I have a home, for it is double the expense, and she thinks I should never drink, save wine at dinner, and I have promised her I would not."

"I hope you will keep your promise, my son."

"Indeed I shall, and I have also promised her that I will never bet money on cards, or a horse-race, though I told her I must wager a case of wine, or a box of gloves, something of that sort, you know."

Judge Cassidy was secretly pleased, for little he dreamed that he was being made the dupe of his own son.

"The boy is all right after all."

"He has sown his wild oats, and this Miss Estevan is having a splendid influence over him."

"I read her wrong, and I will be glad if I did for she has made a changed man of Kent."

"I must go and see her, and try and like her, for it seems that Kent is desperately in love with her, and she must be with him, or she never would take the deep interest in him that she does."

The next day, when he went to the city, Judge Cassidy called upon Queena Estevan.

She was surprised when she received his card, and was fearful that the secret of her marriage was known; but she made herself look her best, and kept the old judge waiting but a few moments.

He could not but admire her as she glided up to him, looking most queenly in her morning-dress, and speaking in a low, musical voice.

She led him to a seat on the sofa beside her, and when the judge said he must leave she detained him to lunch with herself and "dear Aunt Phoebe."

Dear Aunt Phoebe had taken her cue, for she had been, as was her wont, eavesdropping, and when Queena called the butler Jarvis, and told him to have lunch ready soon, with a bottle of choice old Madeira, and send her maid up, to request her aunt's presence, that sly old woman skipped to her room and took fifteen years off of her life with paint, powder and curls.

She burnished up her false teeth, put a little Belladonna water in her eyes, and arrayed like a bird of paradise, in her most gorgeous plumage, she swept into the parlor with a splendor which Solomon in all his glory could not have equaled.

She gave an old-fashioned courtesy, when presented, and murmured gently, for her own ears alone:

"Maybe I'll catch the old millionaire myself, and then I guess I'll know whether it will be Mrs. Cassidy, senior, or Mrs. Cassidy, junior, that will hold the purse strings."

The judge enjoyed his lunch amazingly.

Jarvis was well trained, the salad was of the best, the mayonnaise dressing could not be excelled and the Madeira the judge knew was of an old and rare vintage.

He had gone for a call of a quarter of an hour.

He remained three hours, and when he left he said to himself:

"I don't blame Kent, for she is fascinating indeed, and I only hope he can catch her."



"Why was it I saw her so differently at the opera that night?"

"And her aunt? Why, she's a charming lady, fresh as a rose, and I am half in mind to— No, no; the one love of my life is buried in the grave with the mother of my children."

"I will not be an old fool, but live for the happiness of my son and daughter."

"From to-day I will turn over a new leaf with Kent, for I believe he will stand firm as a rock with that woman to guide him."

Queen Estevan had won her game.

## CHAPTER LI.

### WHAT A SEARCH REVEALED.

BACK to the city went Grayson Glyndon with all haste, confident that at last the large inheritance, which he feared his wife had lost forever, would be restored to her.

"What a lucky thought, that of mine, to go up and see that madman," he muttered, to himself, and over and over again.

From certain things that he remembered, he had always supposed that Patsey Belt had more knowledge of Colonel Lonsdale's acts than any one else.

Patsey had been his confidential servant in all things.

He drove the colonel out, moved him about in his easy-chair, was valet, nurse and all to him.

After the death of the colonel, Patsey Belt had been ill from grief.

It had been a bitter blow to him, and when the house was left deserted he had remained in charge.

It was then that one night Patsey's brain had been turned by what he had seen there.

Always of a vividly-superstitious nature, he believed in ghosts and goblins, and what had appeared before his vision as he slept in the Cedar Hall Mansion had upset his brain.

So fearful was his fright, so violent did he become, that he had been sent at once to an asylum.

And yet, out of that brain, obscured by the cobwebs of insanity, Grayson Glyndon had gotten a ray of reason, had found the treasure which he had deemed forever lost.

The madman also had told his reason for hiding the valuable leather case in his master's coffin; it was to keep it for his young master Lionel, whom he dearly loved and who he believed had been disinherited.

Patsey had supposed that Ruth would get the Cedar Hall estate, the town property and the money in bank, and if Lionel got the bonds, jewels and money in the leather case it would be a fair division.

So he had taken the leather case and hidden it, where he knew no one would find it, in Colonel Lonsdale's coffin, there to await the coming home of Lionel.

Believing Lionel dead, as Grayson Glyndon had told him, he confessed what he had done, so that all could go to Ruth.

It was known that Colonel Lonsdale, from his youth, had been a great admirer of precious stones.

He had inherited a number from his father and grandfather before him, and, with a mania for them, he had collected a large quantity, spending large sums in their purchase.

Then his Mexican wife had been very rich, and she had also brought him a number of gems.

These he had kept at home, in his safe, and the leather case contained them, each stone having its space and its little history.

These gems, worth half a million, the bonds, and a large sum in money Grayson Glyndon was now to find in the grave of the dead colonel, and he felt very much elated at the thought.

Straight to Lawyer Lockwood's office he went, and his story was soon told.

Mr. Lockwood looked serious.

"It is a strange story, Glyndon, and yet it has the stamp of truth, as the poor fellow was known to be devoted to young Lonsdale, and says that he hid the case away for him."

"I will at once have the search made."

"Now go slow in this matter, for I like not this disturbing the ashes of the dead."

"But—"

"What does your wife say?"

"I did not tell her one word about it."

"It would be better, for the opening of her father's coffin needs must give her great sorrow."

"I would like to have you go with me, by night, and—"

"No, I will do nothing in an underhand way, Glyndon."

"What do you mean, Mr. Lockwood?"

"I mean that I am no grave ghoul, and I go there simply to find property said to be left there, and which cannot be found."

"What do you advise?"

"I will go to the village, get a permit from a justice and—"

"I wish no publicity to the affair."

"Nor need there be, for you can carry up two men with you from here, to do the digging, and they, knowing that we get the permit from the justice of the peace, will understand that it is all right."

"Then we can open the grave, and, if we find the leather case, you can report to your wife that it was found in a place you had never thought of looking before."

"All right, I will be guided by you in this matter."

"When shall we start?"

"To-morrow morning; so get your two men and have them ready, and I will write to the justice, whom I know, and have had business with, to meet me at the landing."

And so it was arranged, and the next day the party of four were met at the landing by the justice, who accompanied them up the hill to the burying-ground.

The two men at once set to work digging down into the grave, which had been disturbed twice before, and soon one of them uttered a cry and sprung out, as his shovel unearthed a human face.

It was a moment of horror.

What could it mean?

The colonel had been buried in a metallic case, and his grave had been dug deep.

Here, not three feet from the top, was a form, and more, it was not in a coffin.

In the midst of their amazement a tall form suddenly appeared before them.

It was Del Monte.

"Senors, I saw you approach, as I was over at my home, superintending some workmen, and took the liberty of joining you."

"Mr. Glyndon, am I intruding?"

"Oh, no, Senor Del Monte," said Grayson Glyndon, chagrined at the coming of the Mexican, and he presented Lawyer Lockwood and the justice, and explained in an instant their reason for opening the grave, by saying:

"Some important papers were said to have been concealed in Colonel Lonsdale's coffin, and Lawyer Lockwood is desirous of finding them, for he is the executor of the estate."

"And it seems that there lies a coffinless body?" said Del Monte.

"It is; but what can it mean?" Mr. Lockwood said.

The men, at a motion of the lawyer, continued digging, and soon the body was exhumed.

Grayson Glyndon gave a sigh of relief, as he saw that it was not the body of Colonel Lonsdale, for he had feared that the coffin had been already opened and the corpse simply thrown back into the grave.

It was the body of Bruiser Bill, the Water Wolf, who had been struck dead by lightning, as will be remembered, and whom old Thurber had buried, at the command of Lionel Lonsdale.

But no one present gave any solution as to the mystery of the body being found there, and the justice ordered that it should be laid one side as a case for the coroner to decide upon.

This was done, and the bloated form and features of the dead ruffian were covered loosely with earth.

Then the digging was renewed, and at last came the sound of the iron striking the box beneath.

This was opened, the coffin was revealed intact, and with implements brought for the purpose the lid was taken off.

Quickly the search was made, and eagerly; but the leather case was not found.

Grayson Glyndon almost staggered under the blow, and could utter no word, while Ingersoll Lockwood said:

"The story of Patsey Belt was but the ravings of a mad mind."

With bitterness in his heart Grayson Glyndon walked away, while the coffin-lid was replaced, the grave refilled, and the body of Bruiser Bill left to the care of the justice, who thought that the village coroner might be able to solve the mystery.

But he wasn't, and it still remained a mystery as to why that body was in the grave of Colonel Lonsdale.

"Some one else knew the secret."

"That madman told the truth."

"Some one has robbed the grave."

So said Grayson Glyndon to Ingersoll Lockwood, as the two were on their way back to the city.

## CHAPTER LII.

### THE ASSASSIN.

GRAYSON GLYNDON was almost made ill over the result of the search of Colonel Lonsdale's grave.

He had felt that he had found his wife's lost fortune, and to discover that he had not was a bitter blow.

Of course, as the news of the finding of the strange man's body there must come out, for the coroner's inquest must be public, he had to tell Ruth of his visit to the asylum, of Patsey Belt's story, and of his having the grave and coffin opened in his search for the leather case.

Lawyer Lockwood, the justice of the peace, and Senor Del Monte were with me, Ruth, so they were witnesses, and they were all of the opinion I expressed, that it would be best not to tell you, as it would only cause you sorrow."

"But, as the strange body was found there,

and the coroner had to be called in, why, I could do nothing else than let you know all."

Ruth was deeply grieved, and said earnestly:

"I would rather have lost the property, even had poor Patsey's story been true, than had the grave of my poor father desecrated, looking for his gold."

Some days after, Grayson Glyndon decided that he would drive up and make a call upon Del Monte, who had gone to Cedar Hall to live.

He arrived in time for lunch and was well entertained by the hospitable Mexican, who urged him to remain all night, as there was rain threatening.

"No, I will go on, and if I cannot reach the city, I guess Judge Cassidy will give me shelter," said Grayson Glyndon, who had visited the Mexican to see if some trace could not be gained from Thurber, as to who had been the robber of the coffin of Colonel Lonsdale, for he still stuck to the belief that Patsey Belt had told the truth and that some one had gotten the treasure.

Old Thurber could give no clue as to having seen any mysterious persons about, and so Grayson Glyndon started upon his return home.

He drove rapidly, and yet the rain overtook him before he reached the handsome stone gateway leading into Stone Vale.

As he came in sight of the gate, he saw a vehicle come in view, and he knew it was the depot wagon of the judge.

The judge was in it, called to the driver to halt, and said:

"Well, Glyndon, I am in luck, for I can capture you for my guest to-night."

"I am all alone, for as you know, my daughter is in the city visiting your wife, and Kent is hardly ever at home."

"You certainly will not venture on in the face of this storm, but stay with me."

Thus urged, Grayson Glyndon accepted the invitation to remain all night, and he was soon seated in the comfortable library chatting pleasantly with the judge.

Just as they sat down to dinner a note was handed to the judge, and the servant said:

"He is waiting for an answer, sir."

"Pardon me, Glyndon, a moment, for I have not the heart to keep a man waiting in this storm," and Judge Cassidy left the room.

It was quite a while before he returned, and he excused it by saying that he had been detained by a matter he had to see to personally.

The dinner passed off pleasantly, and Grayson Glyndon, who was noted as a splendid dinner-table talker, delighted the judge with his wit and reminiscences of great men.

They lingered long over their coffee, and the judge asked:

"By the way, Glyndon, can you tell me anything about this Mexican beauty my son seems to be so much in love with?"

"I learn, sir, that she is very rich, and she certainly is exceedingly beautiful."

"You know nothing of her antecedents?"

"No more than that she is the daughter of an American lady, who married a Mexican officer of rank and wealth."

"Well, Kent is deeply enamored of her, and yet I am not yet willing to give my consent to his marrying her, as I received a note the other day, anonymous though it was, which told me to refuse my permission to his making Miss Estevan his wife."

"Do you put faith in anonymous letters, judge?"

"No, and yet they have their weight, and I was glad when your wife asked Jule to visit her for a few days, for she could call upon Miss Estevan, and let me know just what she thought of her, and my daughter is a great reader of human nature."

"I hope she will like her, for I think she will make your son a good wife."

"It is make or mar with my son."

"He grew up steady as a deacon, and then went wild."

"I made my will, leaving him everything, and for him to share with his sister, as he deemed right, so much truth I had in him."

"But he has been very bad the past few years, and I intend to change the will, for it is not right to give him the power I did, and I now see I was wrong."

"But I am keeping you up late; so let us retire."

"Hark! how it storms," and the judge followed his guest to his comfortable room, for he had told the servants they might retire some time before.

Going to his own room the judge passed to and fro for a few moments and then went to bed.

He seemed to make an effort to keep awake, but at last dropped off to sleep.

He had slept but a few minutes when the hall door slowly opened and a form appeared.

The judge kept a night lamp burning, and by its light the intruder was seen to approach the bed, knife in hand.

Suddenly he sprung forward, as the judge started up, and the knife was descending when a sharp report rung out from behind a heavy window curtain, and the intended assassin fell dead.

Then came the sound of rushing feet, of shots,



and Judge Cassidy cried out in a tone of horror, as a tall, bearded form appeared in the room: "Good God, sir! you have killed my guest, Mr. Grayson Glyndon!"

## CHAPTER LIII.

DETECTIVE FERRET HAS SOMETHING TO SAY.

The man to whom Judge Cassidy addressed the startling words, that he had killed his guest, was none other than Ferret, the detective chief.

He had suddenly appeared in the room, coming from behind the heavy curtain, which concealed a window opening out upon the piazza, for the room of the judge was upon the first floor.

In response to Judge Cassidy's words, the detective chief said, in a low tone:

"It is most unfortunate, sir, that your guest, coming to your aid, should have been shot; but will you let your servants bear his body to his room and then come with me to your library?"

The judge did as the chief directed, but he seemed deeply moved by what had occurred.

The body of Grayson Glyndon, for the bullet had passed through his brain and he was dead, was taken to the room which he had left but a few minutes before and the servants huddled together in alarm to talk over the strange affair and to regret that the burglars had escaped and the handsome, generous gentleman had been killed.

"Judge Cassidy, be seated, please, for I have something of importance to communicate to you," said Chief Ferret, when they had entered the library.

The judge seemed almost stunned and silently

His thoughts were with the beautiful wife of the dead man, she whom his daughter was then visiting.

"When I sent my note in to you at the table, Judge Cassidy, it was a part of my plot, as I told you when you came out.

"I learned, as I said, that your house was to be entered by burglars, and you gave me permission to conceal myself entirely and watch for them with my men.

"I asked you not to divulge, even to your guest, that I was there, or that you had a shadow of suspicion of what was going on, and your servants did not suspect.

"But I concealed myself upon the piazza by your window, and, with a diamond and rubber pull, I cut a pane of glass out, raised the sash and had a view of your room.

"Then I took my post outside to wait, placing two of my men at positions where I knew they would not see any burglars and telling them to fire when they heard a shot.

"You sat up somewhat late, but I have patience, and so waited and was rewarded.

"You retired, seeming to think that I had given a false alarm; but I watched and waited.

"The door opened and the man I looked for

"He had a knife in his hand and glided toward your bed.

"I meant to spring through the window and capture him; but you moved and he was too quick for me, as he sprang forward to kill you.

"I fired quickly and killed him."

"You killed Mr. Glyndon?"

"That is the man I sought to kill, for Grayson Glyndon intended to take your life."

"Great God! are you mad, sir?"

"No; and I will prove my words, Judge Cassidy, though, for the sake of his wife, this secret must remain between us.

"The truth is just this:

"Grayson Glyndon was a black-hearted scamp, and he married Miss Ruth Lonsdale under false pretenses, to get her money.

"Not a soul suspected him, and he has ever been a kind husband to her.

"But I have here, sir, the proof that Grayson Glyndon was the chief of a band of rogues, murderers and river pirates known as the Water Wolves."

The judge could not speak for amazement.

"He had studied law in another State, but was debarred from practice for some crime he committed, so he came to New York, under an assumed name, hung out his sign and began to live two lives.

"He herded secretly with burglars and cut-throats, until he found that he could form a league that would bring gold to his coffers.

"He used as a foil and tool, an old woman who keeps a low tavern, but whom he happened to save from being robbed one night, and hence made her his slave.

"She got the men together, and he in mask, held councils with them each week, in an underground dungeon, binding them together by the most fearful oaths and terrible penalties.

"He was never known by his men, and they called him the Unknown Chief.

"He had a secret way to a house fronting on a rear street, and there made his home, or rather spent much of his leisure time there, plotting and planning burglaries, when his wife believed him to be at his office.

"He thus had a large income from their thefts, and, to do him credit, he managed the band with consummate skill, and this woman was the only one who knew him as he was."

"This is a remarkable story, Mr. Ferret, and from other lips than yours, I could not believe it," said the judge.

"I have not told you all, sir.

"In the home of Mr. Glyndon lived a person who was supposed by the neighbors to be his wife.

"She was not, for she was his sister.

"She was not naturally bad, but she had had bad bringing up, for their mother had been a perfect fiend in her struggling to get the gold that belonged to other people.

"Wholly under the influence of her brother, this young and beautiful girl, obeyed him in his commands.

"Their mother when dying left her to her brother's guardianship.

"She therefore knew just what he was, as leader of an outlaw band, though I will give her the credit of not herself entering into his crimes.

"As Glyndon failed to get the fortune he expected by his wife, he determined upon another plan.

"That was to make his sister marry one who had a large fortune.

"He accordingly secured a house, furnished it, got servants, filled the stable with horses and carriages, and hired an old fraud of a woman to act as his sister's aunt.

"He then gave her the name of Queena Estevan, and reported that she was a wealthy Mexican heiress."

"My poor boy!" groaned the judge.

"Yes, he was the victim, Judge Cassidy, and fortune favored the woman, for he saved her life.

"It was known just how you made your will, and it was planned by Glyndon, whose real name is King Grayson, that your son should marry his sister, Queen Grayson, and that you should die suddenly."

"Ha!" and the judge sprang to his feet.

"Be calm, sir, please, for my story nears its end.

"The sister did not, I am sure, know of the murderous intentions of her brother toward you; but he intended to assassinate you, and your will left your son all, and it was easy enough to get rid of him when his wife, Queen, would have your vast property."

"But, sir, they were not married."

"They were secretly married, sir, for the butler in that house, Jasper Carr by name, is one of my best detectives."

"Mr. Ferret, you astound me."

"It is true, sir, and to carry out his devilish plan Glyndon got his wife to write your daughter to visit her; then he drove up to Cedar Hill, intending to stop upon his return, and two of his men were ordered to lie in wait in the conservatory that they might be tracked and give the appearance of outside burglars having done the deed.

"Those men fled at my shot, which killed Glyndon, my men fired as I ordered, and so matters turn out well to hide the double life of that bad man."

"To hide it?"

"Yes, sir, for his wife is a noble woman, and it would kill her to know just what her husband was.

"So it will be best to say that Glyndon heard burglars in the house, came down to arouse you, and was shot by one of them.

"I can say I heard of the intended burglary through my detectives, came to ask you if I could lie in hiding, and in some way missed them.

"This draws the veil over the life of that wretch and protects his lovely wife."

"Will you so let me make my report, Judge Cassidy?"

"I will, sir, for God knows I wish to protect that noble woman, the wife of a man so unfortunate."

"And, Judge Cassidy, I must now deal you a blow, though I feel you will take it as best.

"Your son has also been living a double life, for he has been deceiving you.

"Here are his expenditures of late, including thirty thousand dollars which Queen Grayson put in his hands at the command of her brother, to further entrap him.

"And here, sir, is a note at sixty days, in favor of the Secor Bank, which your son got the money on by forging your indorsement thereto."

The judge groaned in agony of mind, and the relentless detective continued:

"I took this note up, paying my own money, and I hold it against your son along with a few other things that place him wholly in my power."

"Oh! you will not use them?"

"No, sir, except for his good."

"His good?"

"Yes; for I know that he desperately loves the woman he has married, and she dearly loves him and yesterday told her brother he should not plot against him any more and that she would rather be poor as the wife of Kent Cassidy than rich without him.

"Now, I shall go to them when I get back to the city, tell her that I know all and just what her brother was, though I shall keep this a secret from your son."

"I will tell her of her brother's death and say to her if she is willing to go to the West and live with her husband all will be well, and I can promise them an income that will support them handsomely.

"I will say to your son unless he consents to leave New York at once with his wife, giving out that he has gone to Mexico with her, I will have him arrested and sent to prison, and she shall understand that she shall suffer for her connection with the crimes committed by her brother.

"Secured by a good income, and with the ax of justice suspended over them, they will gladly go, while he, suspecting no wrong of her, other than that she deceived him about her fortune, I am sure they will be content."

"I hope so indeed, and your way out of this fearful affair is the right one, and you can command me for the sum you deem necessary, and I would indeed prefer that they go far away, to Mexico, and that I do not see my son again."

"It shall be as you wish, sir, for I hold the power to have it so," was the response of the detective, and, when the dawn came he accompanied the judge to the city—the sorrowing father going to acquaint Ruth Glyndon with the sad end of her husband, and to keep back from her the horrible secret of his double life, and Chief Ferret going to make a call, first upon Queen Grayson, and next upon Kent Cassidy, and use his powers of persuasion upon what he decided was best for their future course through life.

## CHAPTER LIV.

THE DETECTIVE'S SECRET.

As Detective Ferret had supposed, he had no difficulty in having his own way, both with Queen and Kent Cassidy.

Queen had never held for her cruel brother as much love as she had fear, so that his death, though a shock to her, was not a source of inconsolable grief.

Her love for Kent Cassidy had made her a changed woman, and so that she did not lose him, she cared not what happened.

She was content to go to Mexico, where she had lived for some years with her mother and brother, or to the ends of the earth, and to live in poverty if Kent went with her.

And Kent Cassidy, believing that prison stared him in the face, knowing that his father was aware of his crime and his other means of raising money, and wholly infatuated with Queen, although the detective chief told him her money had been squandered by her agent, he was more than willing to fly to Mexico, especially as he was told that he should have a good income paid him semi-yearly, so long as he deserved it by leading an upright life.

So Aunt Phoebe was bundled off with a fat purse, the household effects were sold out, the marriage of Kent Cassidy and Queena Estevan was published in the papers, and the two, with ample means to buy a little home and make themselves comfortable, set out for Mexico, the rumor simply going around that the young man had married contrary to his father's wishes and had gone with his wife to her native land.

The fearful affair at Stone Vale was the talk of the town for days, when it became known that Grayson Glyndon had been killed by burglars, who had shot him while he was a guest for the night of Judge Cassidy.

He was buried with great honors and in Greenwood Cemetery, at the suggestion of Judge Cassidy, who told Ruth that it would be better than to take his body to the Lonsdale burying-ground, for the noble old lawyer did not wish the bones of the guilty man to rest with those of the Lonsdales.

Some days after the funeral Judge Cassidy received a visit from Ferret, the detective chief, and he was accompanied by Mr. Ingersoll Lockwood.

Julie was with Ruth Glyndon in the city, and so the judge was alone.

"I have come, Judge Cassidy, to tell you a secret," said the detective.

"In the first place let me inform you that I am now disguised, and it is so cleverly done that no one has discovered my secret.

"See, I learned the art from a Mexican hair-dresser of putting a false beard on so that it seems natural.

"See, with my long hair, and my beard curling up as it does on my cheeks, my real mustache made gray, no one would suspect that I wore a wig and false whiskers—see!"

He took from his pocket a small bottle, moistened the whiskers as he spoke on cheek and neck, and drew them off.

"Señor Del Monte!" cried the amazed judge.

"Yes, sir, Marco Del Monte and Frank Ferret are one and the same, and I may say this is not all."

"Not all?"

"No, sir; and I will explain, for I have told Mr. Lockwood all, though my secret must go no further.

"Years ago I was known as Lionel Lonsdale."

The judge started, and with a smile the speaker continued:



"I was a trifle wild, and yet I never did the wrong that was laid at my door.

"My father had a step-sister, younger than himself, and she always hated him because he got the fortune and she only a living.

"He offered her a handsome sum, but she refused it.

"She married, and he did not see her again; but she reared her children to hate him, to hate the mother of my sister Ruth and myself, and ourselves.

"Our mother was a Mexican lady of vast wealth, and it nearly broke my father's heart when she died.

"One day father secured a tutor for me, and that man stole funds paid to me for my father by his agent, forged my writing, and left a note as from me stating I took the money and ran away.

"My father believed it, for I disappeared; but I was seized by a boat's crew that night and carried off in a vessel to a foreign land.

"It was a long time before I could escape, and then a vessel in which I took passage was wrecked upon the Mexican Coast.

"A rich Mexican, Marco Del Monte by name, adopted me, and I remained with him, as no letter home ever brought an answer.

"That tutor was the son of my father's step-sister, and he was the man you knew as Grayson Glyndon.

"His wicked mother put him up to getting my father's fortune, and he paid men to carry me off and kill me.

"But they did not obey his order to take my life.

"He intercepted my sister's letters, and he made her his wife, as you know.

"With the death of Señor Del Monte, whose name I took, I came home, and the day I landed I was startled by seeing outlined in the foliage over our family burying-ground, a hand with a pointing finger.

"That finger pointed down upon my father's grave."

Lionel Lonsdale then went on to tell of what had followed, how he had dogged the crew of the sloop to the Seaman's Paradise and had been followed by Stiletto, a Mexican, not an Italian.

Stiletto had sailed in his own yacht in Mexico, and when he made his blow to kill, had failed, been seized by Lionel Lonsdale, who drew him into a boat under the wharf, and when he revived and he saw him in the light, he had recognized him.

Stiletto had at once entered his service, and thus the Water Wolves had been tracked down, for many of them had been arrested the night before in their den underground by the police, led by Lionel Lonsdale.

"That Pointing Finger," continued Lonsdale, "caused me to open that grave, and in the coffin I found the leather case, as poor Patsey had said.

"I was the tramp who returned your daughter's jewels, Judge Cassidy, and I confess to having also lived two lives, if not more; but the end has come, and now I am to be known as Lionel Lonsdale, who took the name of one who befriended me and left me his fortune, and kept myself unknown to see if my old friends would recognize me.

"But as Ferret, the detective chief, I am to be known only to you and Lawyer Lockwood here."

Such was the detective's secret.

But it was not the only secret he had to tell, for some months after, as Lionel Lonsdale he told one to Jule Cassidy, and it was all about his love for her, and asked her to become his wife.

"I will," was her willing response.

"When?"

"Well, Ruth had a letter from her old lover, Captain Douglas Drew, you know, who has asked her to marry him, and we'll make it a double wedding, if you are willing, Lionel."

And he was willing, so a double wedding occurred at Stone Vale, and out of sorrow came joy at last, all through "The Pointing Finger."

THE END.

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